Learning and Teaching Strategy in Higher Education —Views of the University of Westminster Coordinators on the Implementation of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund Initiative (2001–2009)

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Abstract

It was Dearing's Inquiry into HE (1997) that first noted that many universities did not have a learning and teaching strategy (LTS). The resultant HEFCE funded initiative for teaching quality enhancement (TQEF) required universities to develop and implement an LTS. This thesis concerns the development and implementation of the LTS at the University of Westminster from 2001 to 2009, the period of funding. More particularly, this thesis exams the perspective of the learning and teaching coordinators (LTCs) from each of the academic Schools of the University. The LTCs were charged with the management of the implementation of the LTS and teaching quality enhancement change in the institution. This inquiry considers the LTCs views of the nature and implementation of the LTS. The thesis explores the practice of strategy formulation and develops a model of efficient permissive policy and strategy implementation. Responses to the LTS in interviews of the LTCs provide rich perspectives on the professional approach to teaching. The developed LTS Change Model identifies three categories of response labelled as Champions, Adopters and Resistors amongst the LTCs that act as proxies for the wider response of staff across the University. The evaluation of these perspectives demonstrate that the enhancements in learning and teaching evident were not due to any detailed action plan based on the LTS but to a cultural shift in learning and teaching. Modifying the gains in this cultural shift, additional to ineffective strategy formulation and the resistance to change in general, was the nature of academic leadership in the Schools. Despite these negative influences, the recognition and value of teaching in higher education and the facilitation of communities of practice have been the primary cultural shift changes that have brought about a more open and effective approach to teaching quality enhancement.

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Last but by no means least; I would like to thank my family. My parents William and Jessie passed away during the course of my inquiry. They are always in my thoughts for the love and support they provided me throughout my life.

In memory's garden we meet every day.

My wife, Jo, has been an ever present supporter. Her love and that of my children, Robert, Iain and Juliet have been a source of sustenance and inspiration.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Reflective Statement

At the start of my EdD studies, in 2001, I had been seconded to a central University unit, the Educational Initiative Centre (EIC), as the University's Project Manager for the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF). This HEFCE funding was earmarked for the development of an institutional learning and teaching strategy (LTS) and it is this work and the associated inquiry that is the subject of this thesis.

At the heart of the professional commitment to teaching are the changing nature of academic professionalism, quality enhancement (and, often, incompatible quality audit), and policy development and implementation in teaching and learning. These various themes and tensions are evident in my assignments that forms part of the Portfolio submission. The four modules and associated assignments were:

- *Foundations of Professionalism in Education*

  The Resistible Rise of Audit—Motivated Professionalism in Higher Education (Whitlock, 2004b).

- *Methods of Enquiry 1*

  The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: An inquiry into discipline viewpoints and practice across a large post-92 University (Whitlock, 2006b).

- *Methods of Enquiry 2*

  An effective and integrated Teaching & Learning Strategy? An analysis of policy and strategy documents across a university (Whitlock, 2006a).

- *Post-Compulsory Education & Training*

  If it's not countable does it count?—Quality enhancement and quality audit in higher education (Whitlock, 2004a).

The assignments are given in the order of the standard programme though I did not follow this standard order and time-frame having my early studies twice interrupted. Starting with Methods of Enquiry 1 then Methods of Enquiry 2 followed, after a year of suspended studies, by concomitant study of Foundations of Professionalism and Post-compulsory Education & Training are not to be recommended. However, my transition from my background scientific positivist approach to that required for qualitative inquiry did not suffer—it was the process of studying and writing in this unfamiliar paradigm that had been important. Indeed, writing in particular has been of paramount importance in this development and I would recommend to new EdD participants to start writing as soon as possible, including during the search and investigative phase of assignments.

First write, then write and write again. Placing writing, as the centre of my study technique has enabled me to develop an appropriate paradigmatic approach to educational scholarship. I have found that the technique of writing on concepts and themes as I proceeded in my studies for each assignment has been extremely beneficial.

However, that is not to say that a coherent argument can simply appear from a collection of paragraphs on inconsonant topics. That has to be worked at too, in an iterative way. Identifying a substantive argument, the approach to the argument and its structural presentation are essential to a coherent and effective composition. This is so in all paradigms but the process is, to my mind, more conventionally structured in science (my background), so a good deal of effort needs to be afforded to this aspect. So starting with, however ill-formed, an argument that is subsequently, iteratively re-worked has been a technique I have developed with time.

The four assignments each address aspects of my professional practice—teaching and learning policy and strategy—though it would not be true to say that there is a smooth pathway through the assignments as such. This is partly due to the non-standard order and disruption of study, but is too as much to do with my journey from an

academic biological scientist to an educationalist. Certainly, The Methods of Enquiry 1 assignment was more to do with this paradigm discovery dimension, and perhaps I was 'unconvincing' with my theoretical perspectives. However, I was able to transform my former 'positivist' self and embrace qualitative constructivism; at least in part as this is a long road!

My second assignment was my least convincing as I set out with an entirely wrong focus. As I have explained, I had in fact chosen my study as a means to familiarise myself with NVivo. It of course appealed to my technical expertise in software applications and my (former) positivist belief in a single apprehendable reality. There is no substitute for real application and methodological design cannot be founded on the use of a specific technique but rather the purpose and data sources available. My research questions here whilst valid in themselves were not served by the methodological approach and more particularly by the data sources available.

Assignments three and four—Foundations in Professionalism and Post-Compulsory Education and Training—were studied for and completed concurrently. They cover similar topics— quality audit and enhancement—but from different perspectives. The one from the individual academic professional's perspective and the other from a perspective of institutional policy development and implementation. I was concerned in both to develop a clear substantive argument whilst exploring as many of the related tensions in the context of the central theme. The many tensions in this field of quality audit and enhancement are after all at the core of my professional practice as an institutional policy and strategy developer.

For both these assignments, I chose an epigraphic device to introduce and maintain the cogency of the substantive argument. Neither was immediate—I was always clear in my mind about the argument—they were arrived at after a number of iterations of argument development and the first stages of writing. I was led to using *The Resistible Rise*

of Arturo Ui, partly as a former amateur thespian with a dramatist wife and partly by the connection with Hegel and his 'cunning of history' concept. Einstein's quote on what counts and what is countable is doubly apt for me—it is at the heart of my substantive argument and, like me, he was a scientist. I have continued this epigraphic approach in my final dissertation using quotes from Shakespeare's plays.

One of the strategic objectives of the University LTS was the formal introduction of skills and employability into the curriculum, and the University required all courses to have developed a strategy for its delivery by the start of the academic year 2003/4. I wrote a non-prescriptive guide (Whitlock, 2001) to this requirement and provided developmental workshops. The University of Westminster is a large post-92 University consisting at the time of my studies of thirty-six academic Departments arranged in ten Schools across four campuses. The IFS inquiry established the perspectives of academics across the Skills Strategy initiative and informs too my final dissertation on views on University Learning and Teaching Strategy as a whole.

The nature of the qualitative inquiry within this IFS inquiry was informed by the constructivist research paradigm; it was an interpretivist inquiry for understanding academics perceptions concerning policy implementation across the University. This research sought to interpret the perceptions, attitudes and understandings of the individuals and groups and is too the approach adopted in this final thesis.

Each of the EdD modules has provided a focus for the IFS and final thesis. The changing nature of the modern academic in education was a feature of Foundations in Professionalism, and the IFS study and thesis inquiry considers academics' response to the external steering of their profession. Methods of Enquiry 1 and 2 have provided the understanding of qualitative educational research paradigms and research design needed to focus these studies. Post-compulsory Education & Training, particularly in respect of the processes of policy formulation and implementation, has further informed the

construction of the IFS and the inquiry of the final thesis.

My professional role over the course of the TQEF period and since has evolved along with the LTS and its implementation. Previously in the School of Biosciences I was Director of Undergraduate Studies with responsibility for 24 undergraduate programmes. This, along with my many years of teaching in higher education had given me considerable experience of effective learning and teaching strategy. But I admit that much was intuitive and learnt through practice rather than through detailed evidence-informed considerations or reading of the literature. Furthermore, it was primarily done in isolation, there being little opportunity for sharing or indeed a culture of sharing. This individual and intuitive approach to learning and teaching was not untypical of many of those in higher education prior to TQEF and was evident in the learning and teaching Coordinators (LTCs) appointed by the Schools to implement the University LTS. I was seconded to a central academic unit to manage the TQEF and in conjunction with these LTCs and others I, of course, brought my experience and intuitions to the table to help shape the project. The evolution in my role was more to do with the accumulation of evidence from different discipline areas and the development of an understanding of the effectiveness of collaboration and leadership. It has moved from that rather naïve consideration that there is a simple solution to the enhancement of teaching —as a scientist I was perhaps naturally inclined to finding a single solution or cognitive theory approaches—to the more complex but more compelling (for me at least as it emerged) understanding of the need to recognise collaboration and leadership for enhancement as the primary cultural shift required in order to effect change.

My role too, in line with these later changes, has significantly changed with little primary responsibility or cross-University role for LTS and teaching quality enhancement. I do have some impact in this arena as I am Director of the teaching development courses and involved in the enhancement workshops for curriculum design that all reviews and

validations are required to undertake. As I write, the University and my unit are undergoing further structural changes. It seems that no sooner than we have progressed and developed we reorganise and lose some of the gains of the previous arrangements. My frustrations in maintaining and developing the LTS and teaching quality enhancement processes—and culture—evident from the TQEF period is due in no small part to these reorganisations and loss of focus on teaching. The thesis identifies and provides much of the background to those frustrations.

1. Introduction

We know what we are,
but not what we may be.

William Shakespeare (Ophelia; Hamlet, IV, v)

1.1 Higher Education in the Learning Society

Universities are institutions of higher learning in which teaching and research are central pursuits. Teaching in universities, whatever their particular research profile, has always been considered a priority and it is a significant activity for the majority of academic staff. In many of the new universities in the UK—including the University of Westminster where I was a senior academic with a role in the development and implementation of the University learning and teaching strategy at the time of this inquiry—teaching is the primary activity for the majority of their academic staff. In the last fifteen years and longer the status of teaching has been contrasted with that of research and questions as to the quality of teaching in the sector has elicited funded initiatives relating to institutional learning and teaching strategies. The roles of academics have changed markedly over this period, with the increase in student numbers, the arrangements to comply with and accommodate the audit of quality and associated changes in funding and institutional organisation. This inquiry concerns this change in the focus on teaching—specifically in respect of the introduction and development of an institutional learning and teaching strategy focused on enhancement—and the views of those academic staff at the University charged with its implementation.

A major catalyst to these changes was the government commissioned 'National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education', chaired by the late Sir (subsequently Lord) Ron Dearing, and its report, *Higher Education in the Learning Society,* usually referred to as the Dearing Report (Dearing, 1997). Considerations for this national inquiry were

primarily the quality and funding of higher education for widening participation and to address what was thought to be a need for a balance of approach between taught provision and research activities. The inquiry considered the role of higher education in the knowledge economy, 'in sustaining new industries ... via the provision of appropriate labour skills' (Gemmell, 1997, p.4.4).

The Dearing Report made a series of recommendations that subsequently significantly impacted on the governance of the sector. Dearing promoted the status of teaching and urged:

> *We recommend that ... all institutions of higher education give high priority to developing and implementing learning and teaching strategies which focus on the promotion of students' learning.*
>
> (Dearing, 1997, recommendation 8)

Remarkably, at this time most of our learned higher education institutions did not have a strategy for learning and teaching—an LTS. Dearing noted that the strategies of the few universities who did have one compared poorly with their research strategy.

Additionally, related to this, Dearing, echoed by others before and since (Elton, 1993; Ashby, 2002) noted the lack of compulsory pedagogic training and expertise in higher education. This might have implied that academics in our universities demonstrated what Hoyle (1974) refers to as 'restricted professionality'. This inquiry touches on the professionality of teachers in higher education (see Chapter 2 in particular). Further, it also considers the restricted or intuitive leadership of learning and teaching in universities as I note in the evaluation of staff perspectives on the implementation of the LTS (see Chapters 6 to 8).

1.2 Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund

In 1999, as a direct response by the Government to Dearing's recommendation 8, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) put together several teaching development initiatives under one heading, the *Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund* (TQEF), and allocated £90 million over three years to the English higher education institutions. Initiatives and funds for universities and colleges in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were separately considered and allocated by their own funding bodies. HEFCE's aim with the TQEF was to help redress the imbalance between teaching and research in English universities as portrayed by Dearing. Under the new initiatives, teaching was to be viewed as just as rewarding as research and a proper basis for an academic career.

The TQEF had three strands: subject, individual and institutional. The subject strand included support for a network of 24 subject centres—initially undertaken through the Learning Teaching Subject Network (LTSN) and later becoming part of the Higher Education Academy, the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL), and the last phase of the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP). Funding for some elements of this strand was also provided by the other funding bodies.

The individual strand consists of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS), and was contracted to the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE)—itself formed in the wake of the Dearing Report—the putative professional body for academics in higher education institutions. Later, in 2004, ILTHE, LTSN, part of the Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA) and the National Co-ordination Team, who had responsibility for the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects, merged to become the Higher Education Academy.

The institutional strand of the TQEF was to support higher education institutions

in developing and implementing their own learning and teaching strategy (LTS). The money allocated under this institutional strand in return for an approved institutional LTS was based on student number as for the recurrent teaching grant. This was earmarked money to promote the LTS initiative. Universities were being encouraged to develop a LTS explicitly linked to the institution's corporate plans.

All English higher education institutions received a share of £14·5 million in 1999-2000, determined formulaically using the standard resource for teaching funding. This was raised to £28 million in 2001/02, following a demonstrable LTS by institutions.

Table 1 shows the sums that were made available to the University of Westminster in the various TQEF allocations since 1999.

TQEF 1	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/2		Total
	£194,632	£228,189	£241,612		£664,433
TQEF 2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	Total
	£222,103	£235,984	£235,984	£224,768	£918,839
TQEF 3	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9		Total
	£705,564	£799,787	£799,787		£2,305,137

Table 1: TQEF allocations to the University of Westminster

The guidelines for this first fund, or TQEF-1, were published (HEFCE, 1999a) to assist English universities to apply for funds to be distributed between 1999 and 2002. The guidelines identified five key priorities for TQEF to assist in delivering learning and teaching:

- providing encouragement and reward for learning and teaching;
- coordination and collaboration;
- dissemination and good practice;
- encouraging research and innovation in learning and teaching; and
- capacity building.

Under these guidelines, institutions were urged to set targets that could be measured objectively and to produce strategies that could be evaluated to determine whether they were effective. The development and maintenance of high quality institutional learning and teaching strategies, and raising the status and profile of teaching within institutions were the primary goals of this initiative. The guidelines provided a series of case studies (from unidentified institutions) to illustrate good practice elements and policy and strategy development and management considerations. In Chapter 4, I look at some of the real difficulties of the realization of strategy development and change management.

The universities' initial draft TQEF-1 action plans had to be with HEFCE by 31 January 2000. In order to release the TQEF-1 funds, the completed University LTS, with targets, had to be submitted by May 2000.

One initial impact of this initiative to target the enhancement of learning and teaching has been the emergence of a new species of academic specialists in universities. My role is a case in point, having been an academic in the Biosciences for 24 years prior to my initial secondment and then permanent appointment to the role of University TQEF Manager. The role is specifically concerned with writing and implementing the learning and teaching strategy and managing the funds for this purpose. This inquiry, therefore, relates directly to my professional practice as the TQEF Manager during the period of the inquiry and as an academic engaged in learning and teaching enhancement in the University.

Following the initial funding, two further phases of funding were provided; the final three-year tranche of TQEF money ending in 2009.

The second three-year tranche of funds was made available to institutions for 2002/3 to 2004/5 following the re-submission of a developed LTS (HEFCE, 2002). This funding was extended for a further year; 2005/6 (HEFCE, 2004). HEFCE new priorities for TQEF-2 from 2002-02 to 2004-05 (HEFCE, 2002) were:

- widening participation;
- ensuring fair access to higher education;
- maintaining and improving retention rates;
- employability; and
- encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice.

The social dimension of TQEF-2 concerned fair access for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to higher education—a preoccupation with a widening participation agenda evident in the policies of the government of the day and since. The following year saw the publication of the White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003) and the formation of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). The larger numbers of entrants to higher education from previously unrepresented sectors of society have serious implications for an effective LTS. How universities have coped with the numbers and needs of these students is perhaps central to many of the strategies and now dominate their LTS action plans. The increasing recognition of the value and need to enhance student engagement at all levels within higher education as part of good learning and teaching practice is such a consequence.

The priorities for TQEF-3, 2006-07 to 2008-09(HEFCE, 2006b) were:

- ensuring that teaching is informed and enriched by research;
- supporting continuing professional development activity, enabling staff to meet agreed national teaching standards and building a record of attainment against these standards;
- broadening the learning experience through support for student volunteering; and
- supporting success and progression for students with diverse needs.

These requirements for TQEF-3 included a new element for 'teaching informed and enriched by research', as well as elements previously funded separately (*Professional Standards* and *HE Active Community Fund*).

It should be appreciated—though it rarely was by many in the sector—that initially the TQEF allocations were not new money, but earmarked funding that would normally have formed part of the HEFCE recurrent grants in support of learning and teaching to higher education institutions. This I characterised as a 'take-it-away and give-it-back with strings' approach. However, for TQEF-3 the teaching informed and enriched by research (TIER) element was new and based inversely using a formula that included quality related (QR) research funding per student FTE as a proxy measure. Under the formula certain research intensive universities received no TIER award. The initiative was about enhancing the quality of teaching and curriculum development and not about research *per se*. It was about student learning in respect of their research skills and capabilities. HEFCE under this allocation assumed that research intensive universities already had teaching informed and enriched by their research. That assumption is questioned by some as in practice, the link was not explicitly addressed in many higher education courses in any of our universities (Jenkins *et al.*, 2003). It is questionable too that teaching intensive universities did not already have research enriched and informed curricula or that they could develop them simply by funding an initiative if they did not. In practice, I found that the academic Schools within the University of Westminster varied in the extent to which this was already included in their curricula and their learning and teaching strategies (Whitlock, 2009). These funds provide for the enhancement of graduate research capabilities and experience. There was no single prescription but Schools would need to identify the research skills of their discipline, identify current good practice and the needs in their programmes, analyse the needs of their student intake and formulate curriculum design enhancements.

Following the third TQEF distribution (2006/7 to 2008/9), HEFCE announced that they expected the learning and teaching strategies and activities in all institutions to have become fully embedded. Earmarked funding ceased and institutions would continue in the development of their LTS funded from their teaching block grant. HEFCE commissioned a guide that had been piloted with a number of HEIs, *Embedding Learning and Teaching Strategies: An Approach to Self-Assessment by Higher Education Institutions* (HEFCE, 2006a) to 'ensure that strategies for learning and teaching, and the activities to achieve them, become fully embedded within institutions' (p.2). This HEFCE guide contained what was purported to be an 'effectiveness tool' consisting of open questions, organised into six themes. That these themed questions could simply be used as a heuristic device by institutions to judge the effectiveness of their LTS is questionable. In the event, only the pilot institutions completed the task and the results remain unreported.

The nine-year TQEF investment for the University of Westminster amounted to £3,888,000—with equivalent amounts to other universities in England and Wales *pro rata* (in respect of all but the TIER element) with their student numbers—and has, as I will show, impacted upon diverse aspects of learning and teaching in the University.

1.3 A Question of Perspectives

In my view, the impact of the TQEF initiative in developing university learning and teaching strategies and raising the status of teaching in higher education should not be underestimated. As I (Whitlock, 2004b) and others have argued, it is the 'adaptive motivation' (Dweck, 1999, p.xi), 'optimism' and 'persistence' (Seligman, 1998) that are characteristics of the modern academic professional in their resistance and shaping of policy. The LTS was, as with many strategies, 'contested in and between the arenas of formation and implementation' (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992). This resistance to and

translation of the LTS are key features to this inquiry. As Knight (2002, p.189) observed:

> *Change gets changed by people as they participate in making it happen. Change may have its victims but many changes have also been the victims of those they have been intended to change.*

However, a satisfactory evaluation of the impact of the strategies as viewed by academic staff is important to establish its worth. This inquiry focuses on discovering the perspectives of the University of Westminster staff that were charged with its implementation, the Learning and Teaching Coordinators (LTCs) in each of the academic Schools of the University (these are described in Chapter 5). The LTCs are agents of changes or 'provocateurs' as Land (2004) describes them in his categorisation of orientations of educational development; though they often engage in activities that would fit them to other categories. More specifically, the research questions are:

1. What are the LTCs' perceptions of learning and teaching at the University of Westminster and the impact of the implementation of the institutional LTS?
2. How do they view the impact of the institution's LTS on the teaching role and the quality of teaching?
3. What do they consider is required to improve the LTS to make it sustainable and more effective?

1.4 Organisation of this Thesis

The thesis concerns the role of teachers in higher education in the implementation of a university learning and teaching strategy (LTS) and enhancement of teaching. Chapter 2 considers change in higher education and the professionalism of academics in the sector. The particular consideration for this inquiry is the University of Westminster and chapter 3 profiles the University at the time of the inquiry. The University's LTS is considered in

chapter 4 set in the context of a personal evaluation of policy and strategy formulation. The method of establishing the perspectives of the LTCs on the LTS is considered in chapter 5. The results of the inquiry are considered in the next two chapters. Chapter 6 provides an overview and reveals the holistic perspectives of staff. The evaluation contained there is expressed as a model of change and a typology of change agents. Chapter 7 considers the staff perspectives on the categories of inquiry on the LTS and reveals further insight into the implementation of change in higher education. The final chapter draws conclusions on these evaluations on achieving teaching quality enhancement.

2. Change in Higher Education, Professionalism and Professional Identity

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I wak'd,
I cried to dream again.

William Shakespeare (Caliban; The Tempest, III, ii)

2.1 Before Dearing

That universities in the UK, and globally, have undergone radical change through the last 15 years since the Dearing Report (1997) is surely self-evident. Certainly change is a matter that is discussed amongst academics but whilst it is perhaps viewed as more dramatic in this time period, change in higher education is not a new phenomenon. British governments have pursued the public accountability of the education system to meet the economic and social needs of the country for far more than the last 15 years and higher education institutions have always been subject to change in response to government initiatives.

At the start of the nineteenth century England and Wales had just two universities, Oxford and Cambridge. Scotland of course had four and I have heard some academics (not all Scottish) claim that the education system in Scotland, at all levels, has always been superior to that in England and Wales—but that is another story.

Government frustration with the slow response by Oxford and Cambridge to demands for reforms of their entrance and examination systems led to a series of Royal Commissions—1852 and 1874—and Parliamentary Acts—1854, 1856 and 1877—(Curtis and Boultwood, 1966). The University of London in 1827 and the University of

Durham in 1832 were formed as a result of the scientific and secularist movement and the desire for 'practical and technical instruction' (Curtis and Boultwood, 1966, p.150).

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many more universities have been formed. Other institutions of adult learning were also established during these times. Most notably for me and this inquiry, my own institution opened in 1838 as the Royal Polytechnic Institute and was amongst those modern polytechnics created (or re-created in the case of the retitled Polytechnic of Central London; PCL) in the 1960s by Anthony Crosland (the Labour Government's Secretary of State for Education) and eventually PCL became the University of Westminster amongst those 'new universities' created from the polytechnics as a result of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfES, 1992).

The taught provision of universities has always been a priority and a significant activity for the majority of academic staff. This increase in numbers of universities, the rise of the polytechnics in the 1960s and the latters' establishment as the new universities in the 1990s, was a result of the knowledge economy driven agenda of successive governments. The drive from government, influenced by business, was to make education more 'efficient', more responsive to the 'needs' of industry and employers, and more 'entrepreneurial' in its processes and so placed universities in the marketplace (Middleton, 2000; Vidovich, 2002). The imperatives during the late 20th century expansion of higher education were accountability and value for money, in response to growing public scepticism, the need for international credibility and structural and management changes. Key features of control included a means for 'steering at a distance' (Middleton, 2000; Vidovich, 2002) such as funding formulae (of which TQEF is a modern example), criteria-based incentive funding, accountability requirements, selected targets (or performance indicators) and an 'audit explosion' (Power, 1994), which are centred on reform for access and widening participation, qualifications, skills and employability. *A thousand twangling instruments.* Accordingly, external and internal scrutiny of teaching

and of the overall quality of the 'services' provided by institutions became a considerable and significant part of academic management and audit has become 'a formal loop by which the system observes itself' (Strathern, 1997, p.37).

The invasion of professional territory and of the 'hidden garden' of the curriculum in the 1980s and 1990s threatened the autonomy of academics and universities (Kennedy, 1997). Government through its agencies—recently the higher education funding councils (HEFCs) and the Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (QAA)—seeks to impose agendas, redefine higher education and 'open the ivory towers' (Estelle Morris in Goddard, 2001). This persistent undermining of the autonomy of universities by the state is 'structured to achieve politically defined goals' (Tapper and Salter, 2003, p.29). This 'new public management' (Blackman, 2001; Ormond and Löffler, 2002), or 'managerialism' (Millar, 1991), and 'knowledge as a public good' (Stiglitz, 1977; Allport, 2000) raise difficult issues in respect of the objectives and values of a higher education system and the nature of professionalism for staff in that system (Kogan and Hanney, 2000). Morley (2003, p.67) identifies the challenge to 'academic *habitus*' posed by quality assurance measures that have 'reconstruct[ed] academic conditions of work and academic identities'.

Butler's 1944 Education Act was important in creating a structure for the British education system that met the economic needs of the country following World War II. In the 1962 Education Act, local education authorities were required to provide students with grants for living costs and tuition fees. In the following year, Harold Wilson's Labour government accepted the targets for a massive expansion of higher education as proposed in the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1963) and the Committee on Civil Science (Trend, 1964). Robbins recommended the extension of higher education as a universal right for all with the necessary ability—the Robbins' Principle. This marked the beginnings of a concerted state steering of higher education.

How the British government has administered the education system since the nineteenth century reflects this increasing need for economic growth. Prior to 1964, the British education system was administered by a variety of government bodies. The Committee of the Privy Council on Education 1839–1899, the Education Department 1856–1899, the Board of Education 1899–1944 and the Ministry of Education 1944–1964. From the 1960s the names and responsibilities of the various ministries that have governed education is even more revealing. Education was variously coupled with science, employment, trade and skills; all being seen as critical to the economic well-being of the country. This is a central tenant of new growth theory and the knowledge economy (Romer, 1990). It was Wilson's government in the 1960s that first linked the department responsible for education with that for science as the Department of Education and Science (1964–92). It was briefly the Department of Education from 1992, but in 1995 it was renamed the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Following the 2001 general election, the DfEE was retitled the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). In 2007, during Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Cabinet reshuffle, two new government departments were created to take over the work of the DfES, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). Higher education under DIUS was to be governed separately from the compulsory sector under DCSF. DIUS also took over some of the work of the former Department of Trade and Industry (now the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills). In June 2009, DIUS merged with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) to form the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The impact of these governmental arrangements on the quality of education in the UK is not entirely uncontested but academic professional life has certainly been profoundly affected. For higher education, Brennan and Shah (2000) consider four aspects that impact

upon quality—academic (curriculum), managerial (policies and strategies), pedagogic (teaching competences) and employability. Higher education academics have claimed their right to determine the first of these—the design and composition of the curriculum—whilst implying the other three take care of themselves or perhaps are not worthy of over-consideration. The rise of the quality audit procedures in higher education in the 1990s contested this and made significant demands on universities in each of these areas. It is questionable what anyone actually learnt about the 'quality' of the services provided as a result of these management mechanisms. They might possibly have made sense as a framework for professionals to address the enhancement of teaching quality in the contexts of their own discipline and own institutions. However, the restrictive approaches adopted by these audit procedures did not naturally encourage the development of good practice but instead compliance to meet the criteria of the measures. The procedures of Subject Review and Institutional Audit were not often seen as an opportunity for academics to look at the quality of their teaching with a critical lens focused for enhancement, though that was part of the intention of the policy. Audit was—'is'—simply not directly compatible with quality enhancement (Hodson and Thomas, 2003). Nonetheless, in complying with the requirements of review, many did realize a need for a more effective approach to the evaluation of their provision.

In itself, the audit of quality processes does not directly induce the qualitative focus of academic staff. Engagement in the quality enhancement of teaching, to improve student learning and experiences is a voluntary act. Teaching is intrinsically valuable, but as Barnett (2000) argues, it is but one activity in a world of 'supercomplexity' and it has become more challenging than research. Morley (2003, p.100)refers to the 'split focusing' of academics whose 'professional self has become fragmented' with a lack of opportunity to focus on any fragment of their role effectively. She identifies the danger of teaching being overshadowed by the need to publish research, to administer and to audit. The systematically driven

management of professional roles and traditional professional commitments has all but split the research and teaching activities of academics, controlling them separately and giving them different status and priority both within universities and nationally (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 1999).

Changes have been seen in the organization and management of universities. Academics have taken on many more administrative tasks and administrative and support staff numbers have grown. The growth in part-time and visiting lecturers has added to this greater organizational complexity. The traditional view of Deans and Heads of Department as academic leaders whose core duties revolve around their discipline must also be revisited as the individuals who take on these management roles might now be considered more as administrators. Senior management staff are often not prepared for their post and too often have found themselves required to make strategic decisions when they have no real background in institution-wide policy issues. Leadership of the LTS change project is a strong feature in this inquiry.

Supercomplexity, split focussing and differential status could be addressed at least in part by an effective LTS. TQEF and LTS can, as we will see, allow the opportunity to focus upon teaching quality enhancement and afford an equality of status with research.

2.2 Professional Identity and Dearing

In 1996, John Major's Conservative Government commissioned a national inquiry into higher education, supported by the Secretaries of State for Education and Employment, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The commission reported in the early days of Tony Blair's 'New Labour' Government of 1997. The report of the National Committee and its Scottish Committee provided a full analysis of higher education in the UK and 93 recommendations for its future. This report, the Dearing Report, considered the quality and funding of higher education for widening participation.

In 1976, James Callaghan, the Labour Government's Prime Minister, launched the 'Great Debate' on education at Ruskin College, Oxford. The speech concerned education reform, primarily in the compulsory sectors, and matters of standards, accountability, employment and industry (Broadfoot and Pollard, 2000). However, it was Dearing's *Higher Education in the Learning Society* (1997) that was a continuance of that strategic imperative but now centred on higher education.

'Education, education, education' was Tony Blair's key slogan for the 1997 election and beyond. It was during the Blair Government's first few months that the Dearing Report was published. The key driver to the new priorities for TQEF was the Government's stated intention to ensure that 50 per cent of young people should have the opportunity to benefit from higher education by 2010. This was both an economic target and a social target. It was that Government that accepted Dearing's recommendation for the introduction of tuition fees whilst rejecting the continuances of maintenance allowances. Higher education was still available—though no longer free—for all who were capable of benefiting. This is a very different interpretation of that principle first stated by Robbins in 1963.

Dearing identified a need to address the balance of approach in universities between taught provision and research activities. He was keen to promote the status of teaching in higher education, to ensure high quality standards, and to develop the scholarship of learning and teaching in contrast to the pre-eminence of research activity. Universities were to address the quality of learning and teaching in their provision and give support to and recognition for academics showing commitment to excellence. The report led to the formation of a new professional body for staff, the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE; now the Higher Education Academy, HEA) and Learning & Teaching Support Networks (LTSN).

The importance of institutions supporting the development of learning and teaching was highlighted in the report:

> *Virtually all higher education institutions have mission statements which emphasize the importance of learning and teaching. ... we are convinced that the enhancement and promotion of learning and teaching must be a priority for all of higher education.*
>
> *(Dearing, 1997, ¶ 8.8)*

As Dearing recognized, strategies for research in universities were much more developed. The extra funding from the periodic research assessment exercise (RAE; 1986, 1992, 1996, 2001 and 2008) and the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF; results due in 2014), is an incentive for a developed research strategy. Teaching funds distributed by the higher education funding councils , by contrast, are based simply on student numbers, and there had been little financial incentive for many universities to put a great deal of effort into learning and teaching strategies. Indeed, as Dearing found, whilst UK universities had mission statements that included their commitment to learning and teaching, the majority did not have an institutional learning and teaching strategy.

This contrast in strategic approaches to research and teaching might have implied that universities regarded research as the only priority in higher education. However, lack of institutional strategy should not imply a lack of commitment and professionality in teaching by many academics. They demonstrate a commitment to their students' learning and have shared expectations and certain common personal values and beliefs (Austin, 1990). Academics in higher education have rigorous learning, individual to the practitioner, and engage in continuing professional development to update their knowledge and maintain their competence or 'good standing'; that spirited commitment in recent times that is a response to the challenge to monitor the quality of their practice. *The clouds methought would open and show riches.* Their professional standards are broadly

recognized within the academic community with personal responsibility and integrity as the prime determinates of quality. Dearing's intention was that this professionality should be strategically enhanced. For Hoyle (1974), the professionality of teachers relates to the understandings, knowledge, skills and procedures of practitioners. He defines 'restricted professionality' as that which is simply based on experience, with a perspective limited to the immediate, stressing autonomy, where there is no engagement with the literature, and teaching is regarded as intuitive. 'Extended' professionality according to Hoyle involves regarding teaching as rational, basing it on theory as well as experience, and valuing collaboration and engagement with the literature. An effective LTS is one that promotes teaching as a scholarly pursuit and the extension of the professionality of teachers.

The TQEF initiative introduced in the wake of the Dearing Report required universities to adopt a strategic approach to learning and teaching, and sought to raise the quality of teaching in the sector. The effectiveness of this policy is not easily evaluated across the sector and in individual institutions. The impact this focus on teaching allowed during the TQEF period at the University of Westminster is the subject of this inquiry. That the policy has impacted upon the recognition and enhancement of teaching as a professional role is in my view clear. The continuing benefits after the end of this prioritized funding are also considered. Does the engagement with an institutional strategy for teaching quality become marginalized as academics split focus is redirected to other activities?

In this inquiry, staff perceptions of changes in their own professional identity impact on their views on the implementation of the University's LTS. The Institute for Learning and Teaching in higher education (ILTHE) when it was formed in 2001 as a consequence of a recommendation in the Dearing Report debated the values and roles of the profession. Following this the consultation document, *Towards a Framework of*

Professional Teaching Standards, Universities UK (UUK), the Standing Conference of Principals and the HE Funding Councils surveyed the sectors views. As their analysis of responses noted (UUK, 2004, ¶1.9) many want to see a 'framework based on, or incorporating, professional values' and 'an alternative to the conventional competence-based approach to standards'. I would put this more forcefully. My impression at a UUK consultation seminar in 2004 was that academics representing a broad cross-section of universities were thoroughly depressed by the competence-based approach adopted in the consultation material and frustrated by the (successor to ILTHE) HE Academy's direction. Fortunately the response to the consultation in the form of the professional standards issued did not follow this competence route. The renewed UK Professional Standards Framework (Higher Education Academy, 2011) provides a general description of the main dimensions of the roles of teaching in higher education set in the context of values and beliefs. However, detailed strategic and purposeful approaches to continuing professional development in this area are not evident in many universities.

Many academics see the HE Academy as a management body rather than a professional body and have not engaged fully with the Professional Standards Framework. The dimensions of their professional identity are differently formed. For Wenger (1998), identity is determined through the practices and in the communities where practice occurs. The changing and expanding roles and practices of academics in higher education and the fragmentation of their communities perhaps inevitably has led to confusion in academic professional identities. Wenger's five dimensions of identity (1998, p.149) include:

- negotiated experiences—through our participation and the realization of ourselves;
- community membership—through our relationship with the familiar within our own discipline department and the unfamiliar within the wider school or faculty and the university;

- learning trajectory—through our personal journey from where we have been to where we are going;
- multi-membership nexus—through a reconciliation of our various identities; and
- local and global relationship—through relating local identity with wider identities.

Any exploration of professional identities in these terms will lead to diverse and complex narratives of individual academics that may not be simply categorized or usefully applied. However, any understanding of academics' reactions to a LTS is coloured by this complexity of identity. The new professional, as described by Jon Nixon (Nixon *et al.*, 1997) 'holds in tension "residual", "dominant" and "emergent" elements' in the formulation of their identity. For me the residual for university academics are the traditional views of autonomy and the pre-eminence of research. The dominant is the administrative and audit burden of the modern academic. The emergent is the rising status of teaching in higher education and the beginnings of a more widespread realization of dual scholarship in which an effective LTS has some significance to the work of academics.

The implementation of the 93 recommendations of Dearing Report has had an impact on higher education institutions and the staff within those institutions. Not all have survived or had such a significant impact as others but the 'core ideas' that have 'resonated with the sector' (Watson, 2007, p.7) include the enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching and the support to and recognition for academics showing commitment to excellence in teaching. This putative compact between academics and their institutions had promised the recognition of academics' professional worth in teaching, not just research, and the provision of training and development opportunities.

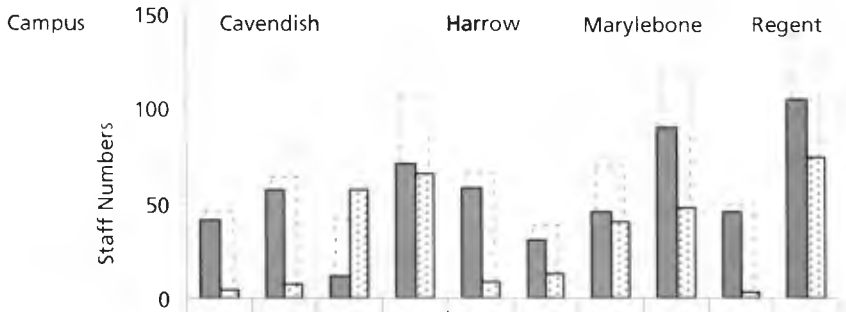
Responses to Dearing and LTS policy formulation across the UK were varied. For some Academic Council or Senate was 'emasculated' (Sutherland, 1998) or their previous exclusive rights in determining their provision 'simply vanished' (Kogan and Hanney, 2000) due to this policy. However, the policy documents used to direct quality enhancement through learning and teaching strategy development (HEFCE, 1998, 1999b, 2002) are, in Barthes (1977) terms, 'writerly' (*scriptible*) and not 'readerly' (*lisible*). Such writerly documents invite the 'active participation of the reader' and an 'involvement in the construction of reality' (Hawkes, 1977). The idea of subject benchmarks also met with objections when first announced with concerns over the threat of a national curriculum for higher education subjects (Pidcock, 2006). But these benchmarks too, though quite varied, are highly writerly allowing academics to maintain their own autonomy. This is exemplified by the three pilot benchmark statements, it being a joke at the time that 'the lawyers had produced a set of rules, the chemists had produced a set of formulae, and the historians had written an essay' (Buss, 2001, p.2). To engage with a writerly document requires an active effort and a translation of the documents intent. This approach in policy and strategy documents for a university LTS is not (as we shall see in Chapters 4, 6 and 7) always well understood, particularly by those that have to enact them.

Academics have more readily embraced the duality of their professional identity—as scholars of their discipline and scholars of pedagogy. This latter is not universal and it is still the case that many, some very senior staff included, consider teaching as an intuitive capability that comes with the former. The recognition and status of staff as researchers in their discipline is still at a premium compared to that of the teacher. Piper (1994, p.6) describes this dual professionality as 'Janus-faced'—with the discipline scholar face the more revered by individuals and institutions alike.

3. The University of Westminster: A Profile

> Hamlet: *Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?*
> Polonius: *By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.*
> Hamlet: *Methinks it is like a weasel.*
> Polonius: *It is backed like a weasel.*
> Hamlet: *Or like a whale?*
> Polonius: *Very like a whale.*
>
> William Shakespeare (Hamlet, III, ii)

The University of Westminster is a multi-site institution with four Campuses, three in central London and one in Harrow. From the start of the TQEF period until 2008 it consisted of thirty-five academic Departments arranged in ten Schools across these four Campuses (see Figures 1 and 2). I resided during this period in the Educational Initiative Centre (EIC), a central academic department outside the School structure. The management of academic structures is devolved to the level of Schools, which implement University policies and strategy in an independent manner with the inevitable consequence that there are differences in operation between the Schools. This is not a criticism. It is right that the different academic departments and disciplines within a university operate in ways best suited to their own contexts.



School	BIO	CSCS	IH	MAD	HSCS	HBS	SABE	WBS	LAW	SSHL
FTE	47	64	42	**108**	67	40	70	**122**	50	**144**
Full-time	44	61	12	**76**	62	33	49	**96**	48	**112**
Part-time	5	8	61	**70**	9	13	43	51	3	**79**

Figure 1: Staff Numbers by Academic School and Campus. See Figure 2 for School abbreviations and other detail; FTE: Full-time equivalents. *Source: UoW Human Resources as of January 2006.*

Campus	School	ft	pt	Departments
CAVENDISH	Biosciences BIO	44	5 (2·9)	Biomedical Sciences
				Biotechnology
				Human and Health Sciences
	Cavendish School of Computer Science CSCS	61	8 (3·4)	Electronic Systems
				Information Systems
				Software Engineering
	Integrated Health IH	12	61 (30·3)	Complementary Therapies
				Community & Collaborative Practice
HARROW	Media, Arts & Design MAD	76	70 (31·9)	Art & Media Practice
				Design, Digital Media & Photography
				Fashion, Film & Music
				Journalism & Mass Communication
	Harrow School of Computer Science HSCS	62	9 (4·5)	Artificial Intelligence & Interactive Multimedia
				Computer & Network Systems
				Information & Software Systems
				Business Computing
	Harrow Business School HBS	33	13 (6·6)	Business Administration
				Creative Industries & Self-Managed Learning
				Information Resource Strategy
MARYLEBONE	Architecture & the Built Environment SABE	49	43 (20·9)	Architecture
				Urban Development & Regeneration
				Property & Construction
	Westminster Business School WBS	96	51 (25·5)	Business Info. Management & Operations
				Economics & Quantitative Methods
				Finance & Business Law
				Human Resource Management
				Marketing and Business Strategy
REGENT	Law	48	3 (1·5)	Postgraduate Legal Studies
				Academic Legal Studies
	Social Sciences, Humanities & Languages SSHL	112	79 (32·1)	Diplomacy & Applied Languages
				English & Linguistics
				Modern Languages
				Psychology
				Social & Political Studies
				Centre for the Study of Democracy
	Total	593	342 (159·4)	

Table 2: University of Westminster Campuses, Schools and Departments (2007) with full and part-time staff (FTE) numbers. *Source: UoW Human Resources as of January 2006.*

However, all institutional strategies for the implementation of change agendas are tested by such autonomy. Since 2008, restructuring under a policy of 'One University' established by the new Vice Chancellor, Professor Geoffrey Petts, School mergers have occurred and now there are just seven Schools. The mergers of the two business Schools, the two computing Schools, and Biosciences with Integrated Health, as well as the other corporate structure changes were on-going in the last year of TQEF funding and during the period of interviews of staff (as described in Chapter 5). The disruption and attention to detail of these changes has inevitably impacted on the quality enhancement processes and infrastructure. This is reflected in the perspectives of staff interviewed for this inquiry.

Figure 1 and Table 2 show the 2007 full and part-time staff numbers, including postgraduate research appointments at the University of Westminster. The majority of the part-time staff deliver discrete parts of taught programmes and are often not engaged in curriculum design.

The University of Westminster had nearly 24,000 students (see Table 3 and Figure 2), which had put it as the 17th largest HEI in the UK, based on the 2003/4 published statistical returns (HESA, 2005).

		Full-Time	Part-Time	All	
Undergraduate	First Degree	10,259	2,605	12,864	17,328
	Other	203	4,261	4,464	
Postgraduate	Taught	1,884	3,957	5,841	6,054
	Research	139	74	213	
Total		12,485	10,897	23,382	

Table 3: Student population by mode and level at the University of Westminster (December 2004 HESA return). 'Other' undergraduate are courses below first-degree level.

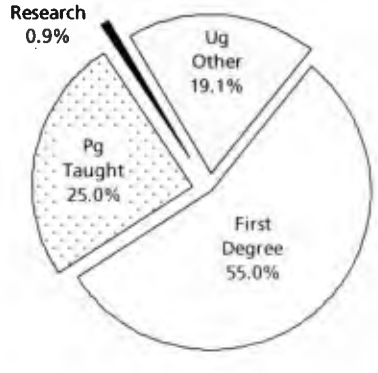


Figure 2: University of Westminster student profile. See Table 3 for details.

Campus		Cavendish		Harrow			Marylebone		Regent		Totals		
School		BIO	CSCS	HBS	HSCS	MAD	SABE	WBS	LAW	SSHL	all	pt	ft
First Degree	*ft*	20	30	8	10	20	25	14	7	18	310		152
	pt	19	23	7	11	15	37	14	7	25		158	
Other UG	*ft*	1			1	4			1	2	86		9
	pt	2	1	4		2	7	5	4	52		77	
Post-graduate	*ft*	11	12	3	21	24	13	21	9	25	412		139
	pt	37	28	13	26	28	37	52	17	35		273	
												508	300

Table 4: Table of courses by mode and level at the University of Westminster (December 2004 HESA return). 'Other' UG are courses below first-degree level.

Table 4 shows the numbers of undergraduate (first-degree and other) and taught postgraduate courses across the ten academic Schools. Many of the 300 full-time, modular taught courses shown also exist in part-time mode, sharing modules and procedures, with course leaders often responsible for full and part-time modes. A number of Schools operate programmes of modules under the management of a Director of Undergraduate Studies and a Director of Postgraduate Studies.

4. University LTS Strategy

Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,
And wit depends on dilatory time. ...
Ay, that's the way;
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

William Shakespeare (Iago; Othello, II, iii)

4.1 Policy and Strategy: A Primer

This chapter is a consideration and evaluation of the organization of University of Westminster's LTS introduced at the start of the TQEF period. That LTS set out the policy and the strategic objectives for the continuing enhancement of teaching and the students' learning experience. As with all such documents that aim to enact change in an organization, there were misunderstandings on terminology, intent and procedures for implementation. These misunderstandings were layered too with resistance, marginalization and compliance. That the LTS is both policy and strategy was not always clear to staff, nor that its implementation was dependent upon clear action plans devised by the University's constituent academic Schools. Other universities have set out their own LTS in a variety of similar ways.

Whilst this chapter is not primarily about strategic management theory it is worth considering the distinctions between policy, strategy and other related terms. That is because I believe that a lack of a shared understanding of the terms was partly responsible for many difficulties in effective implementation of University of Westminster strategies. Not that Westminster is unique in this respect.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'policy' (in its chief or current sense):

> *A course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party, ruler, statesman, etc.; any course of action adopted as advantageous or expedient.*

Trowler (2003, p.95) defines education policy—the 'thing'—as:

> *A specification of principles and actions, related to educational issues, which are followed or which should be followed and which are designed to bring about desired goals.*

Both definitions are limited in the extent to which they portray what it means to be effective as a policy-maker. A policy is a set of guiding principles consisting of statements that incorporate an institution's mission driven values and beliefs. This commits an organization to achieving objectives in a specific time-frame by taking a specific approach. In that respect, a policy starts with a *promise* to take a specific course of action or follow particular principles and thereby deliver defined results or objectives. However, the objectives specified must be defined in terms that matter to the individuals who are affected the actions (the 'stakeholders' in management terminology; though such terminology is anathema to many academics). Furthermore, stakeholders are concerned about more than just the delivery of objectives. They are also interested in the ability to deliver those objectives in a predicted way. Additionally, to be convincing to the stakeholders, the policy must not only be publicly defined by the policy-maker but must also reveal some part of the strategy that supports the policy. The line between convincing stakeholders that the chosen policy is supported by a solid strategy while preserving as much room for manoeuvre as possible is, or should be, a fundamental focus for policy-makers. All this suggests that there has to be a relationship between policy-maker and stakeholders in the construction of an effective policy. I think of this as stakeholders—in the case of an LTS, the academic staff—taking ownership of the policy and strategy rather than being a simple regulation or code of practice to which the stakeholder must comply.

Notably since the Dearing report (1997), teaching in higher education has become an 'object of policy' (Clegg and Smith, 2008, p.1). Effective policy-making, not just in

higher education, is a dynamic process that recognizes the conflicts between the policy-maker and the implementers of the policy, and the realities of 'multiple interpretations' (Trowler, 2003, p.96). The process of implementation of education policy meets with resistance by academics in higher education who seek to defend their autonomy. That resistance to the external interference in the curriculum by academics occurs through creative and imaginative means (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992).

The forms of the response to such changes in professional life brought about by policy implementation have been characterized in various ways. Briggs (2001) describes four different approaches to leadership and quality management in further education colleges. These are 'purposeful', 'strategic', 'reactive' and 'compliant'. Trowler (1998) too describes four categories of response to change—'reconstructing', 'swimming', 'coping' and 'sinking'. How academic leaders responded to the Skills Policy initiative (Whitlock, 2001) in the University of Westminster was the subject of a previous inquiry (Whitlock, 2006c). It identified three types of active response by staff—'lead', 'adoptive' and 'resistant'. However, the fourth or passive response, 'not engaged', is perhaps all too evident in the implementation of many policy initiatives in the large complex organization with flat management structures and many autonomous staff that is a university. Policy-making and the process of change in higher education are complex and contested; they cannot be achieved effectively simply by diktat. The active participation of academic staff in effecting change is essential.

In my experience, the majority of change initiative documents in universities are not referred to as 'policy' but as 'strategy'. This should not be a cause for concern if the strategy document recognizes the need to express the policy principles that are the foundation for the strategy. It should also recognize the distinctions between the main strategic elements of the policy implementation and the actions required by others for an effective strategy. I use the term 'prime strategy' to mean that combination of policy

principle and strategic objectives as distinct from a functional strategy and action plan. But I get ahead of myself—I deal with these distinctions later in this section. Firstly, I should define what is understood by the term 'strategy'.

The concept of strategy has been borrowed from the military and adapted for use in business. Strategy derives from the Greek *strategia*, meaning 'generalship'. In the military, strategy refers to manoeuvring troops into position before the enemy is engaged. Once the enemy has been engaged, attention shifts to tactics. Here, the employment of troops is central. All we need do is substitute the terms 'resources' for troops and 'action plans' for tactics to transfer the concept to the business world. This is the sense of the definition to be found in the Oxford English Dictionary:

> *The art of a commander-in-chief; the art of projecting and directing the larger military movements and operations of a campaign. Usually distinguished from tactics, which is the art of handling forces in battle or in the immediate presence of the enemy.*

But perhaps more usefully, for our purpose, as:

> *The art or skill of careful planning towards an advantage or desired end; an instance of this, a stratagem.*

In the military and in business (including the business of education), strategy bridges the gap between policy and action plans (or tactics), between ends and means. Strategy is a plan, a 'how' to get from the policy promise to the realization of the promise. In his review of wars from the fifth century BCE to World War II, Liddell Hart (1991) describes policy, strategy and tactics, and provides a short definition of strategy as 'the art of distributing and applying ... means to fulfil the ends of policy' (p.321) and 'its purpose is to diminish the possibility of resistance' (p.323).

For me, in practice, it is Haberberg and Rieple's more limited view (2007, p.6) that applies; they define strategy as:

> *... a set of actions through which an organization ... develops resources and uses them to deliver services or products in a way in which the users find valuable.'*

This common view is restrictive and unhelpful. Its focus is the change effecting actions to the exclusion of the driving policy and strategic objectives. Figure 3 (over the page) and the following paragraphs set out my view of strategy developed as a result of my engagement with TQEF. It is located within a wider set of terms that includes mission, policy and targets.

The starting point for policy and strategy is shown in Figure 3 (over the page) as the mission statement. This is yet, more business jargon that perhaps we could do without. The mission of the University of Westminster is:

> *... to provide high quality higher education and research in both national and international contexts for the intellectual, social and professional development of the individual and for the economic and cultural enrichment of London and wider communities..*

Do we really need a statement that says it is our job to teach research and impart knowledge? It is the finer detail on values, beliefs and ethos that are more important and that are encapsulated and contextualised in the formulated policies and strategies of the University. Or at least they should be if the policy and strategy are to be accepted and effective.

The institution's mission and supporting policies only change over very long time periods—years or even decades. To be convincing the policy must be publicly defined and reveal the strategic objectives that supports the policy, whilst preserving as much room for manoeuvre as possible.

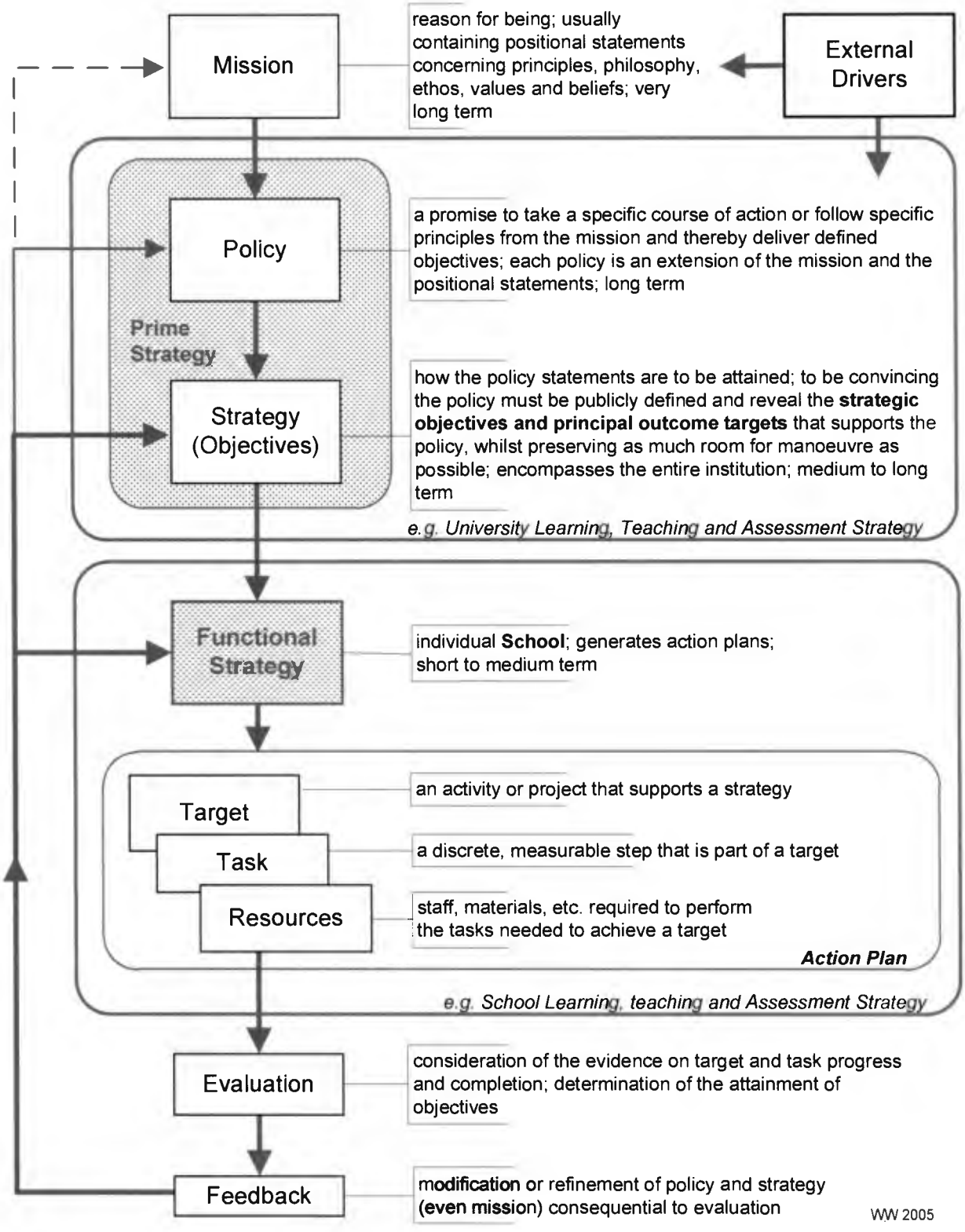


Figure 3: A view of university policy and strategy relationships

In this view, a strategy is a high-order approach to change to implement any given policy and encompasses the entire institution. The key strategic objectives given have a medium to long-term life, counted in years. So often it seems to me, documents bearing the name 'strategy' do not clearly state the policy principals or even provide the strategic objectives needed to realize a policy.

The University of Westminster's LTS is a higher-order institutional prime strategy that encompasses the entire institution—all its departments and operation. The University's LTS in 2009 at the end of the TQEF period is included in this thesis (Appendix C, page 177). Additional to the prime strategy is a lower-order strategy, for the School or academic department that deals with the detailed operations and implementation. This second School-based strategy is what I term a 'functional strategy'—a term taken from business management theory (see Ansoff, 2007)—that provides the action plan to implement the strategy. I have often heard, including in response to the LTS, colleagues saying that a particular University strategy does not have a 'strategic plan'. In this case it is often—perhaps 'often' is not the precisely correct word here—because it is a prime strategy and the colleague's School is required to develop a detailed functional strategy with an action plan. Although, many—and this is perhaps more correct—such strategies are also produced that do not provide the policy principles and strategic objectives of a prime strategy. This failure in understanding was an enduring struggle over the period of the TQEF; getting Schools to fully engage and commit to the formulation of their own functional strategy to meet the policy principles and strategic objectives given in the LTS.

A strategy needs to be succinct, easily understood and set the agenda for change with the key objectives. The University of Westminster's LTS purported to be such a strategy document, a prime strategy—or at least to have achieved that status through a number of iterations. It stated the policy and provided a set of permissive 'strategic objectives' but as

with the HEFCE policy documents used to establish learning and teaching strategy development (HEFCE, 1998, 1999b, 2002), the University LTS is 'writerly' and not 'readerly' (Barthes, 1977). The LTS strategic objectives and targets provide a framework for Schools to develop their own functional strategy and action plans where specific targets are identified, led by an individual or group for delivery within a set period, associated with appropriate monitoring and reporting. The business world would call for a 'SMART' action plan—specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. The LTS invites Schools to actively construct their own strategy that meets the strategic objectives and policy principles. Functional strategies realised through action planning change over periods of a three years and often much less.

The interpretation or translation—from the LTS strategic objectives and targets to the School functional strategy and SMART action plan—is not only expected but required. It is this latter understanding that has been variously confused or ignored by Schools with responses based on the misconception that the LTS is either (or should be) a functional strategy or a simple action plan requiring little consideration.

4.2 Strategy Sedimentation

Should we be surprised by these inadequacies of implementation of strategy? Not if we recognize that strategy formulation is led by 'largely untrained academic-managers' with 'considerable fuzziness in practice' (Clegg and Smith, 2008, p.2).

Our surprise might not be as great either when we consider the number of policies, strategies and initiatives that have bombarded the academics and the academic-manager over the course of a few years. Academics are comfortable with the core curriculum of their discipline, but it is no longer the only focus for debate. As Barnett (1992, p.7) noted in the introduction to a text on issues of curriculum change, 'the curriculum ... is now being colonized by the state, with unifying agendas being urged onto the academic

community'. What with strategies for skills, employability, technology-enhanced learning, teaching informed and enriched by research, assessment, student-centred learning ... and so on with continuing variation and imperative. Academics do not feel comfortable with the issues of the extended curriculum and consider that they are excluded from a wider debate and consultation on such changes. They are to be applauded that they respond with an 'enhanced professionality' (Whitlock, 2004b).

Added to this, the strategies arrive at different times, responding to different initiatives, with different authors and imperatives and often with poor alignment in detail between them. I think of this as the sedimentation of policy and strategy, the layering of one upon another, covering each previous (or at least marginalizing it) with the occasional seismic up-folding and settlement. Not on geological timescales of course but over the period of years or less. These sediments, these strategies, have different aims and objectives and overtime there is increased misalignment and conflict (Cowburn, 2005).
Trowler discusses this as an essential incoherency of policy implementation (Trowler, 2002).

4.3 An English Higher Education Institution Learning and Teaching Strategy

In 1998, in preparation for the establishment of teaching quality enhancement funding, HEFCE commissioned a survey of English higher education institutions to establish the use of learning and teaching strategies. They received returns from 116 institutions that demonstrated 'considerable variation in the extent to which they had developed a strategic approach to learning and teaching' (Gibbs, Habeshaw and Yorke, 2000, p.352). As Gibbs reports for HEFCE, 'much of it consists of policies, mission statements and plans which have not yet been brought together' (HEFCE, 1999a, p.13, ¶ 44). In this 1998 survey Gibbs had identified twelve components to be found in institutional LTS documents with 'varying combinations' and clarity. These twelve strategy-defining components are given as follows.

1. Context
2. Process of creation
3. Goals
4. Culture
5. Targets
6. Curriculum
7. Learning, teaching and assessment practices
8. Quality assurance
9. Quality enhancement and infrastructure changes
10. Implementation
11. Monitoring
12. Evaluation

Gibbs opines that these twelve components,

> *'can work together to create a coherent strategy; with a number of these elements missing, the strategy and its implementation might be weaker' (HEFCE, 1999a, p.20, ¶ 57).*

However, only one (unidentified) institution's strategy had all twelve, and 'a small number' (unspecified) were 'found to contain most components and use language carefully to distinguish these components and their roles' (HEFCE, 1999a, p.22, ¶ 58). Gibbs was at pains here to stress that these elements were presented in different ways by institutions and he was not recommending a prescription. He considered it as of as much importance that the strategy demonstrates 'joined-up thinking and ... a holistic picture that encompasses all the relevant components'.

4.4 University of Westminster LTS Development

Following the publication of the Dearing Report (1997), the University of Westminster started to develop its *Teaching and Learning Policy and Strategy* (renamed in later years twice, finally as the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*) over the period of late

1997 to early 1998, led by a subgroup of Academic Council. It was approved in its final form in June 1998. The strategy was two pages long, stating mission, context, a policy ethos of learning and teaching and a commitment to enhancement—only three of Gibb's twelve strategy-defining components (1, 2 and 4) were in any clarity (see Table 5 over the page). There was little in the way of strategic objectives and no requirements for a functional strategy—those elements of a strategy that I have described under *Policy and Strategy* (page 39) that are so critical for success. It did state that it would be 'supplemented by complementary policies and plans' (i.e. a functional strategy) but no timescale was set and no action taken. This early, pre-TQEF, LTS clearly does not represent a full and coherent strategy when set against the relationships set out in *Policy and Strategy* and the twelve strategy-defining components.

In July 1999, English universities were invited to bid for teaching quality enhancement funds (TQEF-1) in which precise targets for the expenditure of these funds was required. This process required a university LTS to be submitted, but as the University of Westminster's lacked targets and a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation it was submitted initially as a draft strategy and followed by a more complete one. This final more complete LTS covering the remaining period of 1999-2002 TQEF-1 contained the following sections: Context; Process of creation; Policy Statement; Objectives; Targets and Implementation; Dissemination; and, Monitoring and Evaluation. In this, there is evidence of a more complete strategy. Whilst not considering separately each of the twelve defining-components later identified by Gibbs for HEFCE critical review of the University's 1999 LTS arguably satisfies eleven and places it in that 'small number' of intuitional strategies identified by Gibbs to 'contain most components and use language carefully to distinguish these components and their roles' (HEFCE, 1999a, p.22, ¶ 58).

	Pre-TQEF	TQEF1	TQEF2				TQEF3			
Gibbs Components +	**1998**	**1999**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**
POLICY	Policy mission	✓	Purpose	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 Context	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
					UoW Learning Environment	✓	✓	✓		
			Other related Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
					External Changes	✓	✓	✓		
2 Process of creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	Policy Development and Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4 Culture	Policy Statement	✓	✓	✓	University Mission and Strategic Plan	✓	✓	✓		
6 Curriculum					✓	Principles	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 Learning, teaching and assessment practices						Course design				
						Course delivery				
						Assessment				
						Resources				
						Staff				
STRATEGY										
3 Goals	'Policy Strategy'	Objectives	Strategic Objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 Targets		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10 Implementation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			Campus targets	✓	✓					
			University-wide targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
								Recurrent Targets		
8 Quality assurance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11 Monitoring										
12 Evaluation										
9 QE			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5: Review of UoW Policy and Strategy development set against Gibb's (HEFCE 1999a) twelve strategy-defining components

The notable absentee from the components in the University 1999 LTS is that defined by Gibbs as 'Quality enhancement and infrastructure changes' which he considers in some detail under *Change Mechanisms* (HEFCE, 1999a, p.23) that revolve around staff development, reward and recognition. For me, this brings us back to the considerations made in Chapter 2, about the development of pedagogic professionality in higher education and the need for the recognition and reward for staff engaged in such pursuits—Hoyle's extended professional (Hoyle, 1974)—and not just the discipline aspect of the Janus-face (Piper, 1994).

The established LTS following this for 2002 was now more complete, including clearly stated strategic objectives and targets and requiring the development of School functional strategies'. The sections for this 2002 LTS were as follows:

1. Purpose
2. Context
3. Process of Creation
4. Policy Statement
5. Review of Progress
6. Strategic Objectives for Teaching and Learning
7. Targets and Implementation
8. Campus targets
9. Additional University-wide targets
10. Dissemination
11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The University's LTS had since 2007 been formally referred to as the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*. It had been reviewed annually since 2001 and each year a three-year rolling plan of targets is set against the strategic objectives. The LTCs were central to this review and reformulation as members of the Learning Policy Review

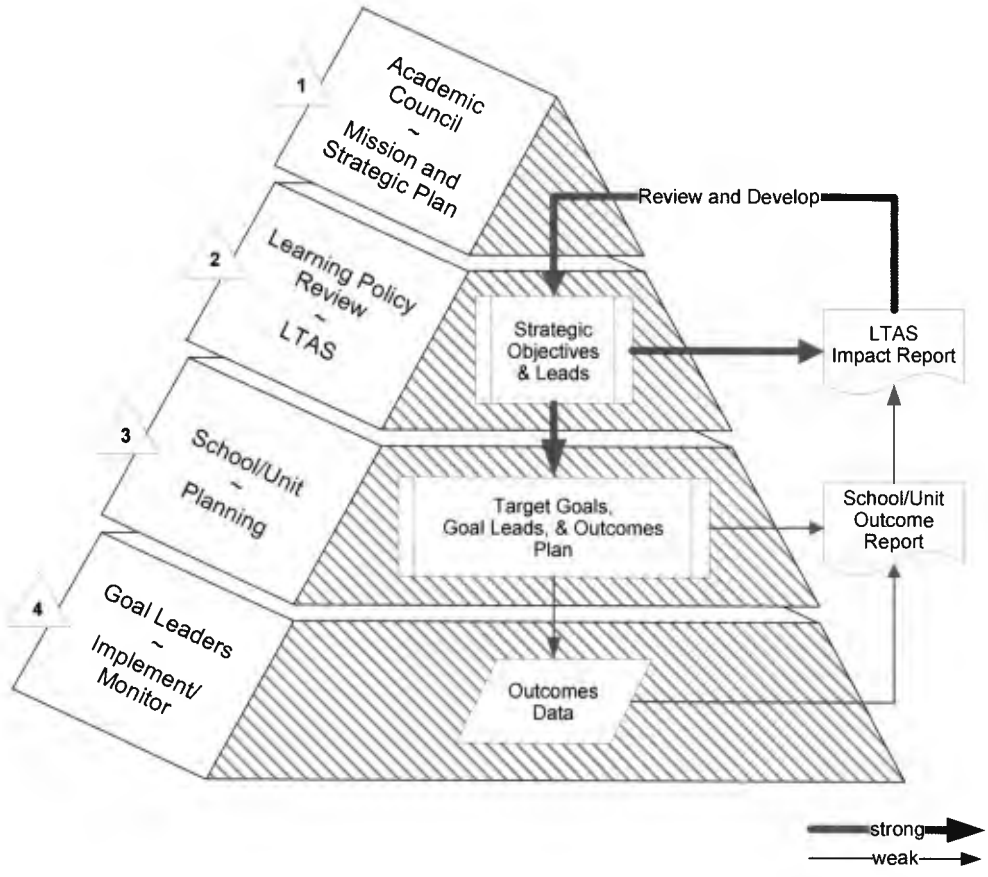


Figure 4: Learning and Teaching Strategy Pyramid with evaluation and feedback loop.

Group. The structural identity of this formulation and review process I have shown in Figure 4 (above). In reviewing these elements I have noted what I considered the strong and weak links in the reporting, evaluation and feedback process. These I have indicated on Figure 4; it shows that the weaker elements were at School level reflecting my earlier considerations about the distinction between prime and functional strategy.

Westminster's LTS document contains sections on policy—establishing the agreed purpose, principles and implementation. The purpose is identified as fourfold: defining the ethos of learning, teaching and assessment; to incorporate, through revisions over time, changes reflected in the academic community; as a way of speaking to external agencies as to our approach to learning and teaching; and finally, more importantly in my

view, providing a framework for staff, stated as follows:

> *The Policy ... acts as a framework for discussing and promoting effective practice in all aspects of curriculum design, learning, teaching and assessment, and as a basis for the evaluation and on-going development of the provision.*

The principles of policy implementation are set out in (what were finally in 2009) 42 statements under five headings: curriculum design, course delivery, assessment, technology and resources, and staff. The permissive or writerly nature of the document is a call to staff to engage in a professional reflective and collegiate approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching as informed by these principles and to take ownership of the strategy.

The strategy section of the document identifies the strategic objectives that were designed to meet the policy requirements. Initially, in 2001, there where ten strategic objectives as given as:

- Strategic Development;
- Student-centred, active learning;
- Teaching/research links;
- Scholarly approaches to pedagogy;
- Assessment;
- Student retention;
- Skills policy;
- Information Skills and Use of ICT;
- Staff Development; and
- Recognition of Excellence in Teaching.

On reviewing these objectives it was evident that they confused recurrent on-going operational procedures (particularly under strategic development). Worse, it exposed the confused and fragmented approach to graduate skills and employability that did not match the good practice developments that occurred in these areas. The annual review of the LTS allowed the formulation of the necessary changes and established a clear set of strategic objectives that subsequently proved more stable. The substantive strategic issues identified in these early versions have not changed in substance, just in the manner of their identification. Arguably this has allowed for a far more focused and effective development of targets that implement to strategy. In the final TQEF period the strategic objectives were as follows.

a. Student-centred, active learning
b. Teaching informed and enriched by research
c. Assessment
d. Technology-Enhanced Learning
e. Transition and progression
f. Employability, Enterprise and Work-related Learning

From its inception, the University LTS had included three-year targets, reviewed annually, set against the strategic objectives. These 'targets' were given to steer the functional strategy action plans of Schools and other units that support student learning. For example, there was a requirement for Schools to 'improve retention from level 4 on full-time programmes' to a specific target percentage. These types of targets can be regarded as specific in outcome but not in action, such that those identified to lead (e.g. a Dean of School) would need to develop a functional strategy and action plan. In the first years of the LTS, many of the LTS targets were directed at units supporting or managing learning as much as they were at the academic Schools. Because of the devolved structures of the University on four Campuses, a number of targets were directed at the senior staff

of the Campus Senior Management Groups. Arguably, these early targets lacked clear purpose or linkage with policy and were certainly too numerous, leading to compliant or bureaucratic responses rather than the functionally strategic focus they needed. But then, as we shall see, it has always been a battle to get senior staff to engage with the LTS and develop their functional strategies—why would we believe that those not ever involved or developed to be able to do so could simply become competent in this skill as required. The most able of business managers have honed their functional strategy competence over many years and have devoted much effort into this key capability. Effective strategies are intimately connected to planning leadership and the culture for its operational form.

There was value in using Gibbs' twelve components in evaluating universities LTS (as for Westminster in Table 5) to determine its coherency or strength but any judgement of the effectiveness of a whole strategy may be more subjective.

In the early years of TQEF funded development of university learning and teaching strategies the National Co-ordination Team (NCT) worked on behalf of HEFCE to support and advice. The first NCT review of university learning and teaching strategies found varied translations of HEFCE policy resulting in a range of effective outcomes (Gibbs, Holmes and Segal, 2002). These varied and innovative strategies given on the NCT website (NCT TQEF, 2003) are a testament to an imaginative translation effect. As the NCT's Director, Graham Gibbs stated in the Times Higher (Leon, 2003):

> *In 1975, there were no government initiatives and scarcely any funding. Teaching innovation was happening, but it was not well documented and there was little sharing within and between institutions. All that has changed dramatically. Activities to improve teaching are more extensive in the UK than in any other country.*

Arguably, this overstates the case. Sharing of strategies within and between institutions and the scholarship of learning and teaching is more evident, but the

improvement (and the processes developed to support it) is perhaps more fragile than this statement suggests.

The second review of TQEF activities by the NCT team (which later became subsumed into the Higher Education Academy) for HEFCE considers changes in institutional learning and teaching strategies by reviewing a sample of strategies from 25 HEIs and notes that many institutions have focused more on centralised support and student-centred activities, and less on staff development (HEFCE, 2005). This survey also recognized that it was very difficult to get any hard data and none that could be compared across institutions. There is just no simple way of identifying progress through the apparent achievements of institutional strategies. The report identifies the widespread support for the earmarked funding approach and recognizes the varied depth of embedded structures to support LTS.

Subsequent to this 2005 NCT evaluation, as stated, HEFCE had provided a further three years funding (up until 2009) but signalled that this was the last and that HEIs should move toward (greater) embedding and evaluation of their LTS. The 'effectiveness tool' provided in this guide attempted to treat a complex change mechanism as a simple scientific intervention exercise. It is not suitable for an inquiry that seeks to gain the perspectives of academic staff of Westminster's LTS.

5. Methodology for Establishing Perspectives

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.
William Shakespeare (Polonius; Hamlet, II, ii)

5.1 Introduction

The research questions for this inquiry (page 21) concern staff perceptions of learning and teaching at the University of Westminster, particularly with respect to the formal LTS and teaching quality enhancement. This qualitative inquiry has taken a hermeneutic or interpretive approach to the understanding of academics' perceptions. Hermes carried the messages of the Gods, and hermeneutics is the art of reading them. Whether the participants in this inquiry, the learning and teaching coordinators in each School, can be regarded as Gods—or experts in respect of the strategic implementation of policy—is debatable, as we shall see.

In the context of this inquiry the responses to policy initiatives are local and specific to, and within, the academic Schools and Departments of the University. Knowledge is interpreted from the perspective of the individual's own construction of experiences and prior knowledge. Perspectives are dependent upon individuals and groups, within these Schools and Departments, for the form and content of the construct, though elements may be shared among individuals and groups and across the academic divisions. This research seeks to interpret the perceptions, attitudes and understandings of the individual and the groups. It is an inquiry that seeks to establish views—concurrent or otherwise—or theory on an inductive or grounded basis (Creswell, 1998).

This interpretation involves developing an understanding of other individuals' views and appreciating the cultural and social forces that may have influenced their outlook. The philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975, 1979) argues that hermeneutics is an approach rather than a method. He uses the term 'dialectical', relating to the discussion of

ideas and opinions back and forth, like a conversation. A hermeneutic circle (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) refers to the idea that the understanding of phenomenon (in this inquiry it is the impact of the LTS) is established by reference to the individual components and the understanding of each individual part by reference to the whole. As more information about the work is acquired, an interpretation gradually changes to incorporate that, although it may never reach closure.

The findings of this inquiry were created by transactions between the participant researcher (myself) and the researched (the School Learning and Teaching Coordinators; LTCs). With such a constructivist approach the distinction between ontology and epistemology are blurred—what can be known (about the phenomena of the University LTS) is intricately associated with the interaction between, and beliefs of, the investigator and the investigated. The methodology involves the interpretation of the varying constructs and an interchange comparing and contrasting the constructs. A more informed and refined consensus construction of policy and its implementation was sought for as an outcome of the inquiry.

The German philosopher Wilhelm Windelband described nomothetic processes as those 'which seek to establish abstract general laws for indefinitely repeatable events and processes' and ideographic, 'which aims to understand the unique and non-recurrent' (Nagel, 1961, p.547). This inquiry does not seek to be nomothetic and to establish general laws. It is an ideographic inquiry that aims to understand the uniqueness of each different view of the LTS. As an outsider in each academic School of the University of Westminster my view or beliefs or theory may have little or no meaning to those of the insider—the etic/emic critique (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Attempting to describe the LTS with a general, non-structural, and objective perspective across the University against a particular framework is unlikely to be successful if it disregards the internal elements and their functioning. This transactional and subjectivist epistemology that does not treat

the investigated as objects researched by an independent objective investigator, stresses the interaction of researcher and researched. The inquiry aims of this paradigm are oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings, wherein the traditional positivist criteria of internal and external 'validity' are replaced by the terms 'trustworthiness' and 'authenticity' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.213). The stress is on formative values and intrinsic ethics—'a process tilt for revelation' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.215) and the features of the research paradigm are characterized as a constructivist or interpretivist seeking to reconstruct an understanding.

5.2 The Expert Group

The University staff profile is given in Chapter 3 (page 35). The views of these staff are many and varied and it is clear from my interaction with many in my role that there is considerable lack of specific knowledge of the detail of the University's LTS. Indeed, to many staff the operation of the University LTS is unseen; and to a significant number unknown. We will see that despite this wide ignorance of the LTS its operation has had an impact upon the teaching within the University but perhaps not as was envisioned by policymakers. In this environment therefore, the inquiry has taken the stance that gaining an understanding of views is best taken through each School's 'expert witness' to the development and implementation of the LTS. These are the School Learning and Teaching Coordinators (LTCs).

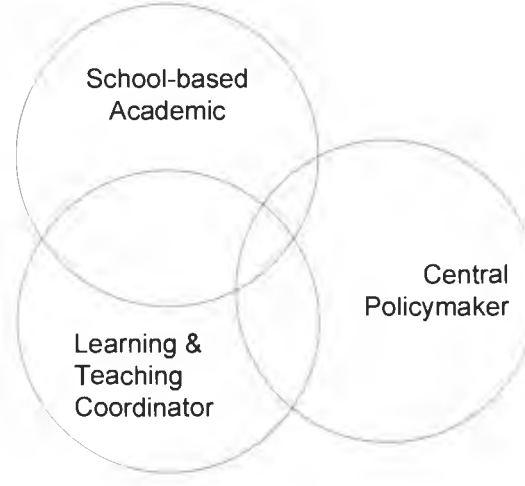


Figure 5: LTCs are School-based academics but also act as policymakers as members of the central Learning Policy Review Group

The LTCs are named individuals in each of the ten Schools with 0.25 of their time bought out by the University's TQEF funding from HEFCE to fulfil their role. The LTCs are part of their own discipline's academic community but also form an important part of the central policy maker grouping for the LTS (see Figure 5). This is the Learning Policy Review Group (LPRG), which I as the TQEF manager also belonged. By contrast to many staff, these individuals are intimately involved in implementing the LTS in their School and engage with their own School staff in the implementation of LTS.

Ray Land (2004) studied educational development orientations and identified twelve 'styles'. A full description of these is not appropriate here for they are varied and are not applied simply—as Land states, they are 'permeable—but at different times and in different contexts and in different degrees. So the LTCs as agents of change, or the provocateur style, in principle in their role also exhibit in varying shades and extent of ability other styles. Notably they demonstrate the styles of 'managerial' and 'political' in the development and implementation of University LTS as well as that of their own School. Land also identified two broad groups, the interventionists and the democratic. The latter describes those who are members of the educational community subject to change and this is clearly the position of the LTCs. However, this is more complex as the academic Schools of the University are broad alliances of cognate disciplines and at times the LTC would act more as interventionist, external to the micro community of particular sub-disciplines or departments within their School.

I have considered the LTCs as an expert group for the purpose of this inquiry. However, they are certainly not Gods and indeed are varied in their own experience and capabilities in the arena of strategy development, implementation and change. But they are the critical players in the implementation of the University of Westminster LTS and establishing their views, and what they know of their colleagues view, by interview is at the heart of this inquiry.

It follows that an understanding of the role of the LTCs is important. From the start of TQEF funding the detail of their role within each School was a matter for the Dean but a headline role description was agreed in 2000 (see Appendix A). The LTC was to be the facilitator of the LTS, working with their Dean of School, and interacting with their discipline colleagues in the endeavour to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. The formally agreed role clearly also establishes the responsibilities of the Dean in the implementation of an LTS in their School. The relation of the LTC to the Dean and the nature of leadership was of interest in the inquiry and staff views on this are evident in the interviews. Indeed, leadership or its lack is revealed as an important dimension of the implementation and impact of the LTS. There are ten LTCs, one for each of the current Schools of the University. Each of the LTCs in post during the 2008-09 academic session were interviewed in addition to two previous LTCs still at the University. That is all twelve of the current or previous LTCs at the University were interviewed. The interviewees have been given pseudonyms to provide anonymity. Figure 6 gives the pseudonyms and the dates for which they have been or were LTC for their respective Schools.

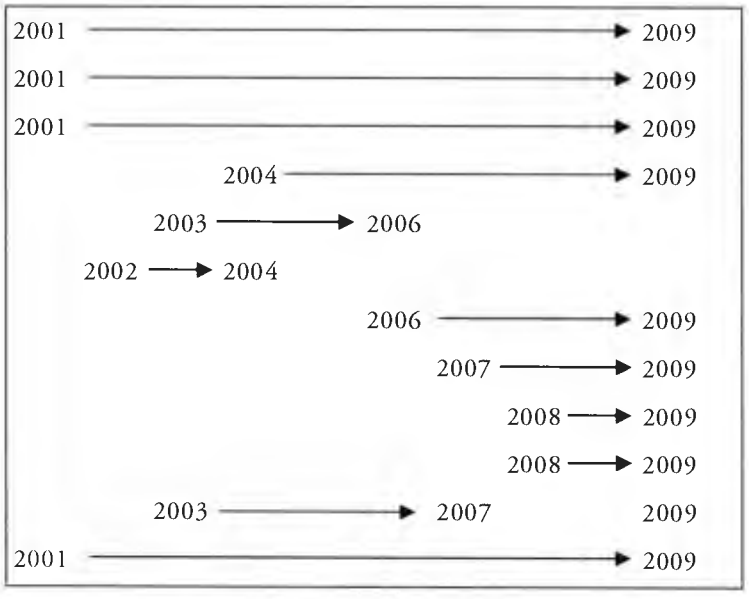


Figure 6: The interviewed LTCs' periods of appointment (names redacted for anonymity; where 'Present' denotes at time of interview).

Four of these interviewees had been LTCs throughout the period 2001 to 2009. The new and relatively new LTCs had different perspectives, particularly as they were formerly part of the School-based 'unknowing' group of staff even though committed to learning and teaching. The two previous LTCs still at the University provided an interesting contrast too. One was very much still engaged in aspects of the University learning and teaching developments as the director of another HEFCE funded initiative.

University academic structural reorganization discussions through the 2008-9 session resulted in the reduction to seven Schools from the start of the 2009-10 academic session. All the interviews took place during the latter part of these changes from the autumn of 2008 through to the spring of 2009. The impact of the reorganization—and the inevitable political manoeuvres that attend such changes—upon the LTS and the views of the LTCs are evident within the interviews and amongst the staff in general.

Access to these staff for interviews was straightforward as they are members of the Learning Policy Review Group and in regular contact with myself on points of strategy and funding. Indeed, it is this group that commissioned the inquiry as part of their review of the LTS. There is no power relationship conflict as I have no line-management relationship with these staff.

5.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The inquiry was submitted for ethical approval to the University's Ethics Committee. My role as TQEF manager and a major contributor to the LTS formulation identifies me as an insider researcher in this study. I take an insider or emic rather than an outsider or etic perspective (Pike, 1967; Harris and Owen, 1994). The validation of my perspective is a matter of consensus of the native informants—the LTCs interviewed—who demonstrate their consensus agreement with my construct in their shared views.

Figure 7: The interview introductory statement

Introductory Statement

Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. You will be aware that this is an inquiry commissioned by the Learning Policy Review Group (LPRG) into the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. LPRG is keen to establish the views of staff on the strategy, its implementation and impact in order to inform its revision post TQEF. The inquiry is also part of my own doctoral research. My role here is simply to establish your own particular views around a number of categories of inquiry. You were selected because of your own particular involvement in the implementation of the strategy in your School. The interview proceedings are entirely confidential and your anonymity is assured. The report of the project will be submitted to LPRG and will be available electronically on-line. I will take some notes but to aid my memory I would like to record our conversation. All such records will be destroyed at the end of the project. Please see below for your rights as a participant in this inquiry. Are you content that I record our discussion?

Your rights as a research participant:

- Participation in the inquiry is voluntary.
- You may withdraw or stop the interview at any time.
- You may refuse to answer any of the questions.
- All digital recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the inquiry.
- Your confidentiality will be strictly respected. Your name as well as any details that could identify you personally will not be identifiable in any reports.
- Anything you say will only be reported as anonymised quotes.
- You may request a transcript of your anonymised quotes.
- Your name and personal details will not be shared with any third party.
- The key findings of the inquiry will be reported and will be available to you on request.
- Any questions or concerns you may have can be discussed at any time before, during or after the interview.

As a central policy maker for the LTS I had a working relationship with the LTCs and also engaged with other academics in a variety of contexts. As a former member of one of the Schools of the University, I was still considered as a fellow academic, committed to learning and teaching as they are themselves. Interviewees know me and my role but it was important to establish the neutrality of that relationship in the inquiry. They needed too, to be assured that what they said was treated with confidence and that they remain anonymous in any reported research documents.

This confidentiality and anonymity are important ethical dimensions in any qualitative inquiry. As Sapsford and Abbott (1996, p.318) state, in the context of social research and unstructured interviews, 'interviewing is intrusive, but having your personal details splashed in identifiable form across a research project is even more intrusive'. In this inquiry the statements concerning interviewee perspectives on the University LTS and the various staff engaged in its implementation were personal and potentially controversial. The interviewees had the right to have what they said as individuals remain confidential. Similarly, it is paramount to the inquiry that interviewees felt able to speak freely, even if others may disagree with what they said, knowing that they cannot be linked to any data that may put them in potential jeopardy. A purpose statement and procedure was adopted as a means to provide this confidentiality and anonymity. This procedure was validated through the University's ethics policy requirements.

An introductory statement (Figure 7) was given in a printed form for each interviewee to read at the start of the interview. The statement detailed the aim of the inquiry and informed them about confidentiality and anonymity, permission to record and explanation of interviewee selection. It gives an assurance that all digital recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the inquiry. In the meantime they are securely stored on a computer with password protection. The statement also details participants' rights to verify their anonymized quotations. In the event no participant requested sight of their transcript.

5.4 Interview Guide

The *depth* or *in-depth* interviews (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992) in the inquiry were organised to allow the discovery of staff views of the University LTS. There are three main methods of qualitative interviews within a continuum of formats—unstructured interview, interview guide, and interview schedule (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The distinction between these techniques is the extent and nature of the preformed questions. At one end of the spectrum, in unstructured interviews, preformed questions are minimal or absent, whereas at the other end, in the interview schedule, the preformed questions *are* the interview. This latter is an important approach when more than one research interviewer is used to ensure questions are used in common (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.269) state,

> *The more one wishes to acquire unique, non-standardised, personalised information about how individuals view the world, the more one veers towards qualitative, open-ended, unstructured interviewing.*

However, in this inquiry, there is only one research interviewer and the choice of format is influenced by the need for probing certain categories of staff views. Consequently, this inquiry used a semi-structured format referred to as an interview guide. 'Categories of inquiry' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) form the basis of the interview, aided by preformed broad questions to help guide the interview as a 'conversation with a purpose' (see the Preformed Questions Guide, Appendix B). The purpose is to obtain rich descriptions from different witnesses. The categories of inquiry are derived from the researcher's own working knowledge and ideas of the inquiry topic, the University LTS and its implementation. The categories of inquiry interview guide provided a framework to explore to a common plan the perspectives of staff on the

University LTS. The categories, as described below, are predicated on the basis of the *University of Westminster LTS Development* (page 48), and is the framework on which the preformed questions were built. They form the basis too on which the views of staff will be analysed and a consensus established.

5.5 Strategic Objectives

As detailed (page 53), since its inception, the University LTS has identified a number of strategic objectives in its policy that has guided its implementation and targets. A number of these objectives have undergone some evolution during the period of TQEF funding. In recent years, certain strategic objectives were given higher priority. The inquiry aims under this category to determine staff views on the appropriateness of these strategic objectives.

5.5.a Strategic Implementation

For each strategic objective, each year a number of 'targets' have been given to each School (as well as other units engaged in supporting learning). The targets are better described as rather narrower objectives that required the Schools to 'translate' and develop their own specific targets in the context of their own needs. I have described this as a 'non-prescriptive' approach that arguably is better to promote ownership. Some targets are recurring and some are associated with new initiatives. Under this category the inquiry needed to explore certain subcategories.

- Process and ownership: How did the School decide their detailed targets in response to the University-wide set targets and their own identified needs? Was it a collaborative process or decided upon by one or few individuals? Were targets SMART (specific, measurable, agreed and attainable, realistic and time-based) and led by named individuals?

- Leadership: What role was taken by Dean, Heads of Department and LTCs in this process?

5.5.b Impact

Schools are required to report upon their progress on targets annually. However, it is not at all clear that all Schools have a rigorous monitoring process that considers progress and impact. Under this category, staff views on the monitoring and reporting process and its improvement were probed. Connected to this is an understanding of embedding and sustainability. Has a culture of enhancement been promoted and developed?

5.6 Preformed Questions

The inquiry wanted to establish the different perspectives of staff on the University's LTS. Did the strategy appear different to these experts? The inquiry looked for and valued both the differences and similarities of views and considered if the different interpretations converge. The interviews focused on individual views. The researcher attempts to elicit descriptive and explanatory information that paints a picture of the individual interviewee's interpretation of a situation or phenomenon (Robson, 1993); in this case the LTS.

The preformed questions built upon the categories of inquiry are given in Appendix B (page 175). Within this process, I was conscious of my own perspectives as policy maker and practitioner; it is not a 'view from nowhere' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000).

The preformed questions were developed and supplemented in the interview with probing questions to elaborate and extend the responses given. The probing questions, by their nature, could not be predetermined as they were used to get interviewees to elaborate, clarify or extend their responses.

Patton (1990) identifies a number of types of questions that include those that

question opinion/value, feeling, knowledge, sensory and background/demographic. The broad preformed questions in this inquiry were primarily of the opinion/value type as the inquiry aimed to establish staff perspectives. All questions were open-ended and focused on the University LTS. There was the occasional need for knowledge questions, for example when trying to establish particular procedural mechanisms within a School. In addition, background/demographic questions were useful in a limited way to establish certain routine information and to aid establishing a dialogue. This latter was helped by beginning with open questions that were non-controversial and framed in the present.

The questions acted as my guide for the interviews. They do not represent the totality of the questions or the discourse between the interviewer and interviewee. The interview format allowed for the reframing of the questions based upon initial responses in order to explore emergent views in a way that would not be revealed by a rigidly structured format. The flexibility of this semi-structure interview format provides for the exploration of the perceived arena while allowing focus on the interviewee's priorities. They are an 'informed conversation partner' (Kvale, 1996, p.125) and are allowed to develop according to interests and priorities within the context of the preformed questions.

5.7 Transcription and Translation

Interview recordings were fully transcribed by an experienced and confidential transcription service and provided as word-processed documents. Initially, I as researcher had begun this process of transcription, but it is time consuming and laborious with each interview taking a novice up to six hours to transcribe. This initial act of listening and creating the transcribed dialogue stimulated the development of themes and coding categories for consideration during the analysis. But using the transcription service was considered an important saving in time that is more usefully devoted to the analysis

process. A perceived potential danger of becoming divorced from the data was not realised as the reading of the full transcripts was more than sufficient. Any potential mis-transcriptions were easily checked as the service had noted timings within the transcripts so that I could check by listening to the recording.

The transcriptions were created as a series of statements by each interviewee in response to the preformed and emergent questions. Each interviewer statement and each interviewee statement within the interview transcripts are numbered. In this way quotations from transcripts are readily identified by the letter of the interview pseudonym (A-M) and by the number of the given quotation (e.g. [G57] represents Greta's 57th transcript response). Of course, the interviews were two-way conversations and the transcription service often included the slight interruptions by the interviewer in what was otherwise a single interviewee statement. As a result some quotations appear in the later analysis as combined or rather recombined (e.g. [C42/3]). Conversely, where there are two or more phrases in a single transcribed quotation they are denoted by an alphabetical suffix notation (e.g. [D58b]). Whilst this is done for all statements in each interview not all potential quotations are used to support the analytical argument.

Each of these numbered quotations was allocated to one of a number of categories of the inquiry. This coding of interviews involved marking the direct responses to the preformed questions and identifying themes and categories from these and the emergent questions. Consequently, the themes go beyond those of the preformed questions. These themes are discussed in Staff Perspectives by Category of Inquiry (page 110).

In this reading and allocation of categories the supporting or confounding quotations were transferred to an Excel spread sheet. I had previous experience of QSR International's NVivo qualitative coding and analysis software but had decided the simple coding and manipulation of Excel to be preferable. Excel allows for an easy way of allocating the identifying anonymous label to each quotation in the transcribed interview

and a means of labelling with codes and subsequent reordering. The quotations with labels are easily transferred to MS Word for the purpose of the analytical report representing complete thoughts on a single question or topic. The spread-sheet functions also enables the generation of the table presented in Chapter 6.

Having coded and ordered statements for each interviewee it was then possible to use this to analyse the perspectives of staff for the deeper understanding of these witness statements against each of the inquiry themes and to create a narrative thread. The narratives represented valuable reading as to the understanding of each interviewee. They are qualitatively rich witness statements. The evaluations and narratives are given in Chapters 6 and 7.

6. Staff Perspectives: A Holistic Evaluation

Speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

William Shakespeare (Othello, III, iii)

This chapter begins with an overview of the interview data following its coding as detailed in the previous chapter. This is followed by an evaluation of the twelve LTC perspectives on the University LTS that provides a model—the Change Quadrant Model—for their consideration. That model is then applied to each interviewee's perspective through a brief thumbnail characterization or sketch. These sketch perspectives might be termed a 'vertical' or holistic view of staff perspectives on the LTS and its implementation.

The evaluation of the interviews provided three of the four potential categories of the developed Change Quadrant Model to be assigned to each of the LTCs. Later in this chapter I provide three 'type narratives'; that is a full perspective that illustrates the features of the category and the similarities to and differences from others.

The next chapter is a 'horizontal' view; that considers the comparative views of the LTCs on the LTS strategic objectives and their implementation.

6.1 Interview Data Overview

Initially, despite Kaplan and Maxwell's (1994) warnings about the quantification of qualitative material, I have provided here a table of data (Table 6, page 73) concerning the interviewees. The numerical analysis of the interview transcripts provided is included for completeness rather than to indicate any great significance to these values. Perhaps, as a scientist by education, I cannot help myself but to say something with reference to numbers.

This table provides information on times, transcript word counts, the number of actual statements by inquirer and respondent, as well as the potential quotations. These potential

quotations are the perspective statements, opinions or assertions made by the interviewee that relate to the categories of inquiry as described in the methods (chapter 5). The table provides some interesting perspectives on the interviews—but it is the evaluation of the staff perspectives given within the interviews that is the prime focus that is discussed later in the chapter.

As detailed in the previous chapter, each of the interviewees have been given pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity and any quotations or comments made have been redacted were appropriate to ensure that their identity remains hidden (see *The Expert Group*, page 59).

The interviewees had very different experiences in the role of LTC. Four (Alice, Ben, Colin and Mark) had been their School LTC since the role was introduced in 2001. At the other extreme, Janet and Keith were entirely new to the role in the final year of the TQEF (2008-9). The others had variable experience during the period of the TQEF from 2001-09, with three (Edith, Fiona and Laura) not acting as their School's LTC during the later years of the TQEF. This length of experience is an interesting variant within the perspectives of the expert group as a whole and is an evident dimension in the transcript evaluation.

Additionally, the interviewees were also representative of their different School disciplines and political composition—different environments create different species (as I shall return to in the later type narratives). That dimension too is reflected in the transcript analysis and provides perspectives on the implementation of the LTS—as well as on the nature of management and leadership within academic environments of the University of Westminster. The need for anonymity does restrict certain opportunities to comment upon this political and social environment dimension.

The twelve interviews totalled 13hrs:11min in duration, with each interview having lasted an average 1hr:05min, with a range from 41 minutes to 1hr:44min. The raw

Interviewee	Interview Duration (h:mm)	Raw Transcript Words	Interviewer Words	%	Interviewer Fragments	Respondent Words	%	Response Fragments (unparsed)	Quotable fragments	Q.Words Sum	Avg	Std
Alice	1:19	11,616	2,914	25	116	8,702	75	117	40	2,139	53.5	31.5
Ben	1:20	14,479	5,804	40	263	8,675	60	263	28	1,799	64.3	37.6
Colin	1:07	11,698	3,665	31	118	8,033	69	118	65	3,458	53.2	26.7
Delia	0:45	7,974	3,213	40	257	4,761	60	258	19	842	44.3	25.3
Edith	1:00	10,351	4,954	48	217	5,397	52	217	25	1,702	68.1	46.4
Fiona	0:58	8,286	3,350	40	114	4,936	60	117	36	1,796	49.9	34.0
Greta	1:00	9,265	5,611	61	127	3,654	39	127	30	986	32.9	19.0
Harry	1:24	12,570	7,402	59	165	5,168	41	165	16	739	46.2	25.6
Janet	1:44	14,872	5,948	40	241	8,924	60	234	29	1,154	39.8	24.8
Keith	0:54	7,754	4,227	55	160	3,521	45	160	27	1,045	38.7	23.0
Laura	0:55	5,543	1,460	26	127	4,083	74	127	18	945	52.5	30.9
Mark	0:41	6,205	3,019	49	85	3,186	51	85	9	289	32.1	21.1
Tot	13:11	120,613	51,567		1,990	69,040		1,988	342	16,894	47.9	28.8
Avg	1:05	10,051	4,297	43	166	5,753	57	166	29	1,408		
Std	0:18	3,058	1,675	12	63	2,203	12	62	14	839		

Table 6: LTC Interview Numerical Analysis

interview transcripts for the full twelve interviews have a word count of 120,613; a figure that includes a relatively small annotation component. The table shows the word count details for each interview, including the breakdown of word counts for interviewer and interviewee. These times and word count details are of interest as a dimension within the analysis. The semi-structured interviews, described as 'a conversation with a purpose', might expect to have an equality of voice in respect of interviewer and interviewee. Indeed, as it was the perspectives of the interviewed that were required it was expected that the interviewee should dominate. On average this was so, with respondent transcript words being some 57 per cent of the total.

Each interview transcript runs to many words; 10,400 on average. However, there is considerable variation within that average. The interviews were a discussion with a purpose that moved from topic to topic often, as with any discussion, in an unordered way except as dictated by the preformed questions. As the interviewer, I had returned to this track as appropriate during the interviews.

It is notable that the most experienced did dominate their interview. Alice (75%), Ben (60%) and Colin (69%) were LTCs throughout the period of the TQEF funding. Fiona (60%) following a period as a School LTC took on a cross-university learning and teaching role. These experienced staff promoted the cause of learning and teaching development in very different ways as we shall see during the evaluation in the next sections of this chapter. They had strong views as expressed within the interviews and demonstrated a varied leadership force within their Schools that contrasts with the leadership roles of Deans and others—a theme that emerged during the interviews and to which I shall later return.

Janet (60%) had less than one year experience as an LTC but spent much of the interview exploring her role and the complex and frustrating political dimensions of her School. She has a good deal to say about leadership. Harry (41%) is like Janet very inexperienced in the role and it proved difficult to extract perspectives from him on the LTS.

Additionally, it is noticeable, for example, that the four long-term LTCs (A, B, C and M) had the most appropriately quotable words (in excess of 8,000)—that is they appear on this analysis to have more to say; more opinion and a more substantial perspective, on the University LTS. Mark was an exception in this respect (3,166 quotable words)—he had a very different experience in his role and in his relationship with his Dean and the staff of his School compared to the other LTCs.

Janet too had a strong perspective (8,924 quotable words), which reflects what was her role in learning and teaching in her School and her shorter time as an LTC. Perhaps we should not read too much into this as Fiona had a substantive role in learning and teaching within the University post-dating her time as an LTC and yet with 4,936 quotable words seems to have had less to say. But then it is the nature of those statements and not the length that is more important. Also, it is I who has decided what is and is not appropriately quotable and however consistent and objective I have tried to be in respect of the application of the categories of inquiry analysis; there is always an element of subjectivity in this process. This is of course the danger of trying to use quantitative analysis for what is a qualitative inquiry.

6.2 Perspectives Revealed

In evaluating these individual perspectives and as a way of modelling the views expressed I first considered them as a spectrum of views; no single colour but subtle (or less subtle) variations between two extremes. This is a sort of Likert-type scale, with LTCs' views varying between the one extreme of policy-led and functional strategic approaches to change and it implementation, and the other extreme of simple compliance. In this way my first consideration placed each LTC along the scale as an approximation of how each described their view of the LTS policy and strategy with those more compliant or resistant, towards the right end of the spectrum. Figure 8 illustrates this overview.

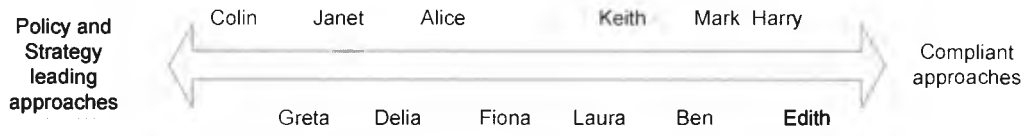


Figure 8: A one dimensional view of LTCs' perspective on the LTS.

The spectrum reveals the major distinctions in the LTCs' perspectives. Colin saw the need for change, embraced the policy and prime strategy (see Policy and Strategy: A Primer; page 39), and implemented an effective functional strategy in his School. Edith, by contrast did not accept the need for change, was not compelled by the vision of the LTS and implemented strategies that were simply to meet the requirements for the release of funds.

This simple scale is an oversimplification and the two extremes represented by Colin and Edith are not readily applied to the other LTCs views. This one-dimensional evaluative model does not clearly distinguish between those that saw the need for change and accepted the policy and prime strategy and those that had limited functional strategic capabilities (or their Schools did not have or permit such). It was not just Colin that had embraced the policy and the strategic objectives (the prime strategy) but others had been thwarted by their own functional strategy, which was not resistance on their own part (except for Edith) but was primarily due to a resistance in their Schools.

A more holistic view or gestalt is required to model all the views expressed by the LTCs. From this consideration I explored a two-dimensional or quadrant view. In this model, the policy axis varies from the 'principled'—that is those who accepted the need for change and embraced the policy and prime strategy—to the 'sceptics'—those that rejected, at least in part, the need for change. The strategy axis relates to the development of a functional strategy based upon the prime LTS varying from the 'compliant' or 'dysfunctional' implementation strategy to those with highly functional implementation strategies. This latter appears to be exclusive to those with a principled policy view—it is perhaps self-evident that if you were a

non-believer in the changes associated with the LTS (or your School management was), then your School functional strategy is likely to have been limited and dysfunctional.

The resulting LTS Change Quadrant Model (Figure 9) provides a better evaluation of staff views. On reviewing this approach I noted the similar conclusions I had drawn on staff responses to the introduction of the skills strategy in the University (Whitlock, 2001) that I discussed in Chapter 2 (page 41) and the identification of categories of response that can be applied to these four quadrants. These response categories were lead, adoptive, resistant and not-engaged

Figure 9: The Change Quadrant view of Staff Perspectives on the LTS.

This model and four-part categorisation also has close similarities with Hank Karp's (1996) resistance model of change (Figure 10) whose axes are 'I get'/ 'I don't get' and 'I don't want' / 'I want' are equivalent to my policy and strategy axes respectively. The categories in Karp's model are power, victim, resistance, and loser.

I apply these two category set names to my LTS Change Quadrant model with some variation as follows.

Karp's I get/I want category he labels 'power' in that effective change occurs where there is acceptance for the need for change and a desire to implement. I used 'lead' in my skill strategy response evaluation but now prefer, in the context of this study, the term 'Champions' for change. Colin and Greta were lead or 'Power' agents; they were 'Champions' that recognised the need for change and implemented purposeful functional strategies. However, even here there was a nuance of difference. As we will see when the sketch narratives for Colin and Greta are considered, they are not equal, having quite different functional approaches. There is scope here in the model for a third or mechanistic-cultural dimension. Colin's strategy was very defined, almost mechanical, and did not rely on his School's staff getting it or accepting it. Greta's approach was more holistic or cultural, relying on persuasion of staff to agree with the precepts of the policy through which they were invited to engage in purposeful and rational strategic activity.

Figure 10: A Change Resistance Model after Karp, 1996.

Janet and others in the upper left quadrant did 'get it'—they saw the need for change and embraced the policy principles—but many in their School didn't want it. The

success these adopters had in implementing change was varied depending on the extent of this resistance. Some of these adopters were more 'victims' (Karp's change resistance model) as it was evident in the interviews that their Schools did not fully accept the need for change or for the full scope of the changes indicated by the LTS. The frustration for these 'victims'—or 'disabled' as I alternatively label this category—of seeing the need for change without having the ability to bring this about fully is a feature in their narratives.

'Resistors' like Ben and others in his (lower left) quadrant didn't get it and didn't want it. They demonstrated resistance to change in not accepting that it was needed, not finding the vision of change in the LTS policy compelling and not fully complying with it. Some of that resistance was rational, but for some or at times, it was due to an inability to form effective functional strategies in the context of their own School. Or, was it possibly that staff demonstrated resistance as they tried to reduce the pain of change? As Karp (1996) opines, it not resistance to change itself or the need for it but the pain associated with change that is often the cause of resistance (Karp, 1996). As I noted in my study on the implementation of the skills strategy at the University (Whitlock, 2006c) and elsewhere (Whitlock, 2004b), it is the resistance that can bring about change. It is not the particular detailed strategy that is important but the reaction of staff to the strategy, in combination with the focus on teaching afforded by the LTS, that have been most influential in the enhancement of teaching.

There appears to be no LTCs or former LTCs of my 'not-engaged' or Karp's 'losers'. Wanting something that you do not see a need for is counterintuitive. Although some strategies were effective in that they released funds, they were shallow as the end goal was the funds and not the change. In these circumstances we are not likely to see embedded approaches developed that have long lasting sustained effects. Additionally, the LTCs themselves identified a number of such staff who are not-engaged as we will see in the next chapter.

6.3 LTS Change Model Sketch Perspectives

In this section I provide a sketch narrative of each LTC's view of the University LTS and its implementation. It is ordered according to the three potential types from the LTS Change Quadrant Model—champions, adopters and resistors.

6.3.a Champions

In the LTS Change Quadrant Model (Figure 9) Champions are those that accepted the need for change, supported the policy and prime strategy and developed and implemented effective functional strategies. Just two LTCs fall into this category—Colin and Greta. The following sketch narratives describe their perspectives and explore the nuances in the differences of their approaches and those of their respective Schools.

▫ Colin

... was a strategist and supporter of the University LTS whose impact upon his own School's quality enhancement agenda was widely recognized. He described the LTS as

> *... a fine strategy because it did something we didn't have ... which is, we didn't have something that said, these are particularly the sort of things you need to do [C5a].*

Gladwell (2000, p.33) in discussing social epidemics describes the 'Law of the Few' in which the success of the epidemic 'is heavily dependent on the involvement of people with a particular and rare set of social gifts.' He relates this to the economic 80/20 principle that says that 80 per cent of the work is done by 20 per cent of the people (p.19). The people with the special gifts are categorized by Gladwell as 'Connectors', 'Mavens' and 'Salesmen'. Connectors have 'a special gift for bringing the world together' (p.38) knowing many people including those with particular specialist knowledge.

Mavens are collectors and sharers of information and knowledge (p.62). Salesmen are 'persuaders' with powerful negotiation skills. I recognize Mavens as what I have termed the champions of learning and teaching practice.

As an experienced and committed teacher Colin has led the teaching enhancement developments in his School—he is a learning and teaching Maven, a champion. But Colin is a frustrated strategist. This frustration is identified as the lack of engagement by senior academics with the LTS and their particular capabilities as change managers. He said,

> *I don't think it's the fault of those people because if you get somebody who is expert in discipline, goes into management and then goes on to become a Dean and that's it, do they automatically have the skills of changing something in the implementation plan, isn't that something for which you do an extra degree or whatever? [C29c]*

I am reminded of the Peter Principle as first given by Laurence Peter (Peter and Hull, 1969), which states that members of a hierarchical organization are promoted to their highest level of competence, after which further promotion raises them to a level at which they are not competent.

A type perspective narrative for Colin is given later in this chapter as a prime illustration of many of the views across the University.

▫ Greta

... was a pragmatist. She saw change as centred on the sharing of practice that happened when staff wanted to resist the externally derived LTS. Greta sees the University LTS as

> *... guidelines which represents ... a philosophy' [G2] [that is] not*

> *supposed to tell us what we should or should not do. It's how do you interpret the terms that are being used within teaching and learning.*

She saw it as a way 'to get people to think about' learning and teaching. The LTS 'provides a focus' and 'we look at it as some guidance' [G44]. The LTS then provided a 'framework' for …

> *… the conversations that may not have happened before and … you go away and think about it and you take it away for your next session to teach. So it's kind of informal dissemination of good practice'. [G70]*

For Greta, this 'whole new way of working' makes didactic approaches 'stand out; and students criticize that because they're used to different ways of working with tutors' [G70]. Sharing practice was …

> *… perhaps a hidden place … because all the course leaders come together and talk about—It's often about just sharing the issues that have come up, but then also finding solutions together [G97].*

Whatever the future of the LTS, Greta stressed the importance of a learning and teaching 'framework' for staff [G106]. 'If you don't have a framework [staff] don't do these things' [G107]. Greta's strategic approach was less well formulated in the way of precise targets than that of Colin, less mechanistic, relying instead upon the collaborative engagements with staff to establish ownership and acceptance of policy. This cultural shift approach is a longer term process but is likely to be more sustainable in its effects than a purely mechanistic approach.

6.3.b Adopters

In the LTS Change Quadrant Model (Figure 9), adopters are those that accepted the need

for change, supported the policy and prime strategy but were unable to fully develop and implement effective functional strategies in the way that they desired. They may have been victims of their own undeveloped strategic capabilities or were, more usually, disabled by the resistance they meet within their School to the change strategy so that their functional strategy was not as well formed as other Schools. This in itself does not make the strategy totally ineffective. Alice, Delia, Janet, Fiona and Laura all fall into this category. The following sketch narratives describe their perspective and explore the nuances in the differences of their approaches and those of their respective Schools.

▫ Alice

... was very positive about the LTS as it 'sets a direction for teaching and learning across the organization', 'a sort of guiding principle'. Alice probably represents the 'knowing gambler' perspective of academic staff in the University. She was an experienced and committed teacher who was a supporter of the LTS but was highly critical of its implementation. She presented as someone with metacognition, with the knowledge about when and where to use particular strategies for learning. Her criticism centred on the University's inability to present its policy portfolio in a coherent and coordinated way and the inability of senior academics to represent and enact strategies. The lack of engagement by senior academics within the School was for her critical for the effectiveness of the LTS. As she said,

> *If it's not valued and expected at the very top ... it's not going to be valued by the teachers themselves' [A9a].*

A type perspective narrative for Alice is given later in this chapter as a prime illustration of many of the views across the University.

▫ Delia

... viewed the LTS as having been

> *... devised to explain clearly to staff and to focus staff on ... teaching and learning priorities.*

Delia was concerned about

> *... the danger ... that staff start seeing it as something separate' [D46]; [that the] corrosive effect of strategies and targets become burdensome [and] grate with staff in terms of academic freedom [D47].*

Delia was another frustrated strategist, but her frustration arose from the complications of the complexity of her large multi-discipline School and the large numbers of visiting lecturers used across many courses. Staff development in this context for her was particularly poorly supported.

▫ Janet

... was another frustrated strategist. The LTS was not valued and that lead was primarily due in her view to the poor engagement of senior academics. Critically, it was

> *... about valuing it [and] having a new Dean who does value it. But there is a distinction between valuing and the 'everyday' activity of staff [J34a].*

Janet identified the lack of 'reward' for learning and teaching coupled with the 'drive to do lots of research' as a tension [J34b]. On the positive side, Janet saw the 'language' of learning and teaching, of the strategy, 'used more regularly' [J137].

▫ Fiona

... saw the University LTS as 'an awareness raising tool as well as a guidelines type of tool' [F10] and 'something that mediates change' [F11]. She saw her role partly as 'a conduit' [F8] and partly as a translator of policy for others [F16/19]. Fiona is also what Gladwell (2000) describes as a Maven. She hates targets 'because they put the attention on the target rather than on what your process is', but would 'encourage other people to recognize that it is a very simple way to articulate something and [that] it is important to get people off the idea of meeting the target [and into] the tool idea'—that this is 'a simple expression of the things' that should be done and how it can be made to 'work for us' [F57].

▫ Laura

... related the LTS as a change tool to Kolb's Learning Cycle.

> *You've got to go through surface learning first, and then gradually get people going round Kolb's cycle, and I think probably the Learning and Teaching Strategy has taken us on that path [L65].*

As well as reflection, Laura says 'it's partly about accountability'.

> *For some people it seems to be accountability in terms of bureaucracy, whereas for other people accountability is actually about professionalism, it's not accounting to a centre, it's accounting to our peers and ourselves for why we do what we do' [L28].*

6.3.c Resistors

In the LTS Change Quadrant Model (Figure 9), resistors are those that did not accept or fully accept the need for change, and/or the prime strategy and implemented simply compliant strategies. Whilst victims, as we saw above, may have experienced resistance in their School management or staff they themselves are not resistant. The LTCs in the

Resistor category did resist partly or fully the LTS policy—quite a shock as they were appointed to aid its development and implementation. And there are five in this category—Edith, Harry, Mark, Ben and Keith—but the form of their resistance was very different as the following sketch narratives demonstrate.

▫ Edith

… was resistant to and dismissive of the LTS. She considered the LTS and its targets as 'prescriptive' and without 'any indication of the mechanism' of implementation. A 'sort of wish list' [E81]. It was an 'imposition from the centre' and 'ministerial' tick-boxes [E82/3/4], with initiatives that 'come from Government thinking' … with 'various buzz words' to which 'we tended to jump to' … 'rather than formulate our own agenda'. To her the LTS was an irrelevance but her view that 'the very best thing is for Schools to have their own strategies' [E82/3/4] and her perspectives on change promote light-touch strategy. There was little support here for the School to formulate its own strategy. There was no distinction made in her approach between prime and functional strategies (Policy and Strategy: A Primer, page 39). She expressed that superior attitude that says we have the best practice and do not need to engage in this ambiguous and unproven approach to quality enhancement. A type narrative perspective for Edith is included within this chapter as the minority report from the expert group of LTCs.

▫ Ben

… had been an LTC throughout the entire period of the TQEF funding and therefore in a position throughout to be a major influence on the policy and strategy. Despite this he was dismissive of the LTS, seeing it as a bureaucratic exercise not related to what goes on in the classroom. He says the strategic objectives are

> *... not something I need to bother my head about too much [as] 'they didn't really impinge on my working life and my colleagues' working life in the classroom [B8/9].*

For him it was the 'add-ons' that made the difference. He means by this the activities, the learning and teaching engagement events involving groups of staff. I would argue that these were facilitated by and dependent on the LTS and would not have occurred to the same extent without. This includes for example all those occasions when staff have met to action an element of the strategy and have shared practice and discussed issues in learning and teaching. This without the LTS was a rarer and more unfocussed activity but subsequent to the LTS has facilitated quality enhancement. This view that isolates policy from practice is not entirely untypical of staff across the University but perhaps one you would not expect from an LTC.

- Harry

... considered that the practicalities of teaching in higher education override any drive from the LTS and this is further marginalized by a lack of senior management engagement. Rather than the LTS, Harry opined that the

> *... biggest drivers of change in terms of what it taught, how it's taught and when its taught ... has to do with the modifications of the timetable, the significant number of students who would not meet a historical expectation of being prepared to do Higher Education study, and I think those have led to changes [H79].*

- Keith

... supported the LTS as a framework but his approach to TQE is a deficit model—he wants to give high priority to dealing with poor teaching through observation. This is a

paradox. The staff in the School consider their practice superior, Keith says so, and yet he also identified areas of very poor practice.

> *Someone's got to sit in the classrooms and watch what's going on' [K126].*

Keith has 'been so perturbed by what [he has] seen in some ... observations that [he] really feel[s] impelled to try and improve it if [he] can' [K149]. He says,

> *I don't mind what the policy is provided whatever is put into practice is better than what we've got at the moment [K41]. [So], making teaching as important as research is how it should be. It's fundamental.*

Keith considered the position of LT Director is overdue [K20/1]; that is a

> *new learning and teaching supremo with a proper status, linked to senior management authority who can stand up and say, 'We've got to improve our teaching' [K40].*

He says that 'Deans and the Heads of Departments are not the academic leaders' [K66]. The idea of managing learning and teaching development is alien to the culture in the School [K78].

6.4 Type Perspectives

The previous section gave sketch narratives of all the LTC interviewees against each of the three represented categories of the Change Quadrant Model. This section provides a more detailed narrative of just one interviewee from each of these three categories as 'type' representatives. The three type perspectives given are representative of the three categories of the LTS Change Quadrant model described earlier—Champion, Adopter, Resistor.

I have borrowed this approach from evolutionary studies where a holotype is the single specimen or illustration designated as the type for naming a species and provides a way of comparing transitional specimens and evaluating speciation. Of course in nature, new species arise because of the different survival of variants in the context of differing environments. The survival of the fittest concept in evolution theory perhaps has some parallel with the varying discipline and School contexts of our LTCs.

These type narratives should be read in full in order to appreciate the perspectives of the interviewees. Each of the type perspective narratives given in this section is a reconstruction of the principal understandings from the interviews. They are the selected words of the interviewee as demonstrated by the quotation marks and labelled by the given numbering. I limited my own words in this dialogue reported here so that the voice of the interviewee is evident throughout. They spoke for themselves and are revealing when read as a whole.

6.4.a A Champion of Change

Colin had lectured in higher education for 22 years, was a Principal Lecturer in LT and had been his School's LTC throughout the period of TQEF. He was Chair of his School's LT Committee and a member of the Senior Management Group.

For Colin, the LTS gave directions and guidance without 'making very clear distinctions between the obligations and the recommendations' [C4a]. But it was a 'way forward for all parts of the University to make sure things improve' [C4b]. But it 'doesn't mean that it is owned by everybody; as it should be so that it is implemented' [C4c]. 'It is a fine strategy because it did something we didn't have ... which is, we didn't have something that said, these are particularly the sort of things you need to do' [C5a].

The LTS strategic objectives are 'right' and 'probably' ... 'recognized', but not 'understood for every single person; I don't think they reached every single person' [C10].

The non-prescriptive targets approach 'is the correct approach because each School has different needs' [C29a].

However, the 'lack of ownership by lecturers, lack of ownership by Heads and Deans, lack of ownership by Chancellors, ProVCs and so on' was a principle problem for the LTS, 'it wasn't just a problem further down' [C6]. It has been 'just lumbered as a role with someone else who was doing quality and all that. It is something that needs to be owned, but it is also something that needs to be enthusiastically approached by people. Currently it was, "what do we need to do?" [and] "Let's do the minimum"' [C7]. 'We have very rarely had Schools that said "how about next year we do this Learning and Teaching University-wide target"; led that way. It was always, and I see that in other Schools as well, grudgingly the fact that "oh hell, why do we need to do this?"' [C8].

For Colin, whilst 'we had documents that said this is a general vision' ... 'that was interpreted [in the School] as "we did staff development, tick, we've done it"'. [C5b]

'You can have a particular target which goes to School ... and discussed ... so therefore, tick, and we haven't had from the top of the University the kind of checking mechanism, perhaps monitoring that makes sure that things are owned.' [C5d]

Colin also identified an LTS policy issue. He observed that the 'drawing into that policy, other policies' that because they 'didn't have targets', we introduced targets and 'started addressing a problem that wasn't really ours to address.' [C9a] An example of a functional strategy that attempts to integrate other perceived issues that overcomplicates, if not confuses at best, the implementation of the prime strategy.

For Colin, the strategy needs 'to put whose going to do what, by when, and if it isn't done by then you have to find out why' and 'we have to come back and monitor and follow.' [C9b] He gives the example of PDP—Personal Development Planning (Dearing, 1997). 'I remember the first year, by the end of the year every course will have something on PDP. I don't think many years later every course has something on PDP. Even now on

validations ... I see documents coming and you say, "well this document doesn't really have PDP" ... "you don't really say how you are going to do it".' [C12b]

The identification of priorities for the LTS has not been fully effective. 'The system of saying we only prioritize one was good, [but] saying we are going to prioritize 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [is] too many ... because what is the thing we did not prioritize.' [C23]

Colin did have a 'brilliant' learning and teaching committee, which he chaired. Issues were 'argued in frustration'—his and others. But, 'at times there were people understanding and following and at times there were people just nodding and hoping it would go away.' [C30]. However, 'we threw ideas from different points of view, ... it synthesised things and we came up with brilliant plans [which] were accepted but not really adopted or joined up with anything else that the School was doing.' [C32a] 'I think this is a culture issue of everybody outside the School is out to spy on us and find fault with us.' [C40a] The Dean and the Heads of Departments were not on that School LT committee. Targets were developed by the committee 'exclusively'. [C42/3]

Reporting 'was unnecessarily bureaucratic at some point in the early stages because there was a need for a report for the latest implementation group and an interim report for the campus strategy learning, or whatever ... and people in both groups designed ... different formats and ... then the School had a different way of doing it. ... I think in the end it wasn't ... monitored as long as there was a report there. I don't think it was even read.' [C62a] I get rather fed up with reports ... I've grown to believe that reports may not be the best way to monitor and actually may be counterproductive.' [C65]

In the event, 'I couldn't report on targets which I was told verbally had been done and I knew in my gut they hadn't. I wanted it to be for someone else to have taken the ownership of the statement that something had been done.' [C47]

'The minutes of the meeting isn't evidence that it has been done, its evidence that a meeting has been done to discuss it. The evidence that we need is, "here is a change in the

grade of the students", "here is a change of assessment" and all that.' [C67a]

Colin has a particular view of our senior academics and their abilities to plan and organise. He ended up in many areas 'chasing managers' many whom 'ignored' given procedures. 'That wasn't the fault of the lecturers.' [C25] 'The problem didn't lie with the strategy thing. The problem existed in the fact that, and it isn't the fault of the individuals here, it has to do with training. Does everybody know how to do an organizational plan, does everybody know how to take a strategy and do implementation? [We have] to acknowledge that the skill doesn't exist with everybody.' [C29b]

Colin was particularly exasperated when 'the Dean said "we are not going to have any more of these [team meetings] as people are coming up and changing things and arguing things for change and all that"'. [C34] Also, when in a School management group meeting where 'somebody very senior in the school' confused course team development meetings with course (staff-student) committee meetings. It 'was completely new news to him'. [C36]

The consideration by senior academics in Colin's School was that he, as LTC, met the School's LTC responsibilities. They would ask him "Where is the report?" The concept of meeting as a senior group to discuss planning and reporting seemed alien to them. "No, no. When is it ready, it has to be ready, why are we here?" was the response. "So you haven't written it yet?" 'It's that kind of thing, learning and teaching doesn't have to do with us [Deans, HoDs]; it is something someone else does. [C44]

Colin very early on in the TQEF period 'gave up monitoring ... things that were responsibilities of the Dean, because ... every time I asked for a document it was, "I will send it to you". Every time I asked for evidence, "I'll send it to you". ... I have no authority, which is why, I think if you want to do the monitoring properly, either you need responsibility to be with the Dean or create an associated Dean of learning and teaching or something like that.' [C62b]

He considers that Deans and Heads of Departments 'are too focused on budgets and budget management rather than dealing, because I would put academic leadership not only with discipline but also with the development of the people'. [C83] 'I think they are engaged just in reacting to whatever comes from above and ignoring whatever comes from below.' [C84]

Colin has more respect for the leadership capabilities of the course leaders. Whilst most initially 'didn't have a good understanding of what they needed to do. Once they understood they grabbed it and run with it. When I said to people who got stuck [I] said you are the course leader and ... you decide what goes. You are the ones bringing the income and the ones deciding the needs, argue the case. They were not aware they have these abilities to do that. They loved it.' [C33] 'The thing that was quite encouraging for me was the fact having gone through all of this frustration [with] management, to go and reach the ... course leaders in the team. Most of them were running with it, they were willing, they were really hungry to have this flexibility to do things.' [C37]

Colin has a take on the relationship or distinction between quality assurance and enhancement. 'Let's look at the assessment problems, ... we are talking about the enhancement for people who haven't reached the minimum level of assurance. If you have complaints of people who don't give feedback, is it the role of the learning and teaching strategy for the enhancement and for the innovation? Or is it a role for some rules to say this is the minimum we expect, in which case is there a role for the learning and teaching coordinator. Or is it a role for the Dean and Heads of Department?' [C16a] 'The person who teaches very, very badly, the person who keeps complaining, the person who doesn't give feedback, the person who gives the assessment which is impossible to understand, the person who over assesses everybody, the person who gives the deadlines a day before he should, things like that, are these some things the strategies should deal with?' [C16c] 'We have been moving towards quality enhancement with a big chain on our leg, which

was the quality assurance.' [C20] 'We have this negative thing coming from QA or we have this negative thing coming from NSS [the National Student Survey]... which we need to deal with, which was quality assurance and wasn't really quality enhancement.' [C21a] '"Send it in so we can tick the box and say we've done it and then you need to implement it." ... I can't go on every single course and write in them when it should be done and actually it would be the wrong thing to do because it would have to be done by the course team.' [C32b] 'I've seen these things on validations from eight different Schools where they see the validation panel as "You are here to tell us what to do and instruct us how to do things and we dislike you" rather than "you are here to help us come up with better ideas".' [C40b]

Colin whilst recognizing that 'dissemination via the learning coordinators was good' saw that 'the problem ... was that learning and teaching became what the learning and teaching coordinator was saying. It was recorded at meetings as "don't ask me ask the learning and teaching coordinator"' [C11]. 'This is the liaison with a different country ... with learning and teaching; "don't ask us"' [C12a].

But, 'we did get the dissemination working well' [C13a]. Despite this Colin likened the enhancement of teaching to a caterpillar. 'We have three different groups of lecturers, ... you have the people in front, the front legs running, the middle legs walking and the back legs not moving and eventually, unless we kick the back legs, we are going to stop. The front was innovating, they were innovating alone in the office, nobody knew about it. We have worked a lot in the last few years not only to get these people to talk but to create a culture where they are talking to each other.' [C13b]

Colin has particular views on the impact of the LTS on teaching quality enhancement that accord with his caterpillar model. 'It's a better culture of dissemination of good practice. I think that even if we disappear, this thing has worked, this thing will continue having people not doing it on their own but going outside and saying let's do a

demonstration and show you. I think that's worked.' [C14] 'We have disseminated some very good ideas ... things on personal teaching ... on e-mentoring, ... on using technology to solve problems, ... on automated feedback ... brilliant ideas that we have developed because of this strategy.' [C21b] 'We have a lot more people active in learning and teaching development, people who would normally believe that the only thing they need to do is stay current with the discipline.' [C50] Dual scholarship 'was completely alien' previously, as 'it is very alien to many places and many universities particularly to science.' [C51a] 'These thinking creative people who have started coming up with ideas and when we introduce a new development fund it was interesting in the first year ... almost everybody put in things that they wanted to do or to go to conferences ... on ... learning things.' [C51b]

'In the beginning we had about six projects, mainly conferences, then it went to about ten, and now I have about eleven. But eleven involved far more people [in collaboration] than the original ones. ... Going back and announcing that the committee has approved this but on the condition that you talk to so and so to bring them on board and so on, to force it that way.' [C56]

Through this Colin opined that 'the top 50% of the school have improved'. ... The people on the top who were the innovators [now] found it much easier to innovate and have improved much further in my view because of the policy [the LTS]. The people in the middle [of the caterpillar] who normally would have done nothing have done a few things, have got an understanding of some things that happen nationally, some issues that they were not aware of' [C68]. 'The back legs I don't think have been touched, I don't think they care, I don't think they understand anything' [C70]. 'I think originally, when I believed that eventually they will be dragged, that was naive of me because they didn't have any incentive to be dragged' [C73]. 'The ... back end weren't only people stuck at the top of the SL, they were also people who were in very senior positions in the School' [C74].

However, now for Colin, 'the culture in the University has come' ... "let's look at the evidence, this is the thing we recognize", "we are going up the league tables", "we are going up on [NSS] assessment", "we may disagree with them but ... this is what we are going to be looking at" [C67b].

There are particular and general development needs for Colin. 'What was in the School strategy for the last four years, ... which we haven't yet done that much is to use this thing as stepping stone for people to go outside and say ... what you are doing ... but I think we still haven't cracked the confidence issue.' [C60]. But for the University as a whole, 'the first change ... [needed] is a year plan ... that tells Deans [and] ... the rest of the School ... the key things that need to be done ... [including] monitoring, appraisals, peer observation, staff development' [C75]. This annual plan 'also needs to put staff development here ... where we put the research seminar of the school, ... the learning and teaching seminars' [C76a]. 'Currently loads of Schools have to work reactively. ... An e-mail comes and says, "By the way, by next week you have to have your [whatever] report", and everything else freezes' [C76b].

But, 'the whole thing would disappear and be undone if the money disappeared. [Well] I think a lot of it will stay, I don't think we would have had in [our discipline] five [University] learning and teaching fellows if it wasn't for the last eight years of having the money and pushing things because a lot of talent that we knew we slowly supported. When you support somebody and you can go the following year and say let's have a chat about what you have done and let's see how you are going to go forward even without the money.' [C58]

Colin shows his commitment, even passion in the role. 'I would think I've made a difference, I think there is evidence that I've made a difference ... there are people who tell me I've made a difference. I think there are plenty of people now who can do the job as well as me, but back then I think it was good that it was with somebody who had, I

wouldn't say confidence, I would say the insanity to go to anybody and everybody and start arguing, in essence trying to push people to do things or try to encourage people to do things and try to argue down regardless who they were and what position which other people perhaps would have been too intimidated to do which it needed.' [C89a] If I started this again, 'I would have started from the very beginning with the kind of detailed implementation plan that I ended up having and saved myself a lot of hassle and to some degree probably trained the managers to what I expect them to do and not fall for what I have fallen which is, "this is yours to do", which meant I took on a lot of the senior leadership role which wasn't the role of the learning teaching coordinator' [C89b].

6.4.b An Adopter of Change

Alice had been in higher education for some 19 years, was a Principal Lecturer, and had been the LTC for her School throughout the TQEF period. She was not a member of the School Senior Management Group and although there was a School Learning and Teaching Committee she did not chair it.

Alice was positive about the LTS as it had set 'a direction for teaching and learning across the organization', 'a sort of guiding principle' for the School to set their own targets. But she did see the implementation practice as somewhat of a bureaucratic exercise [A2a].

She states that she was a 'little confused' that it was both strategy and policy in the same document [A2c]. Alice was very critical of policy documents within the University. She did not 'think ... any of our "policy documents" ... are actually policy documents'. 'There is no forward direction, there are certain key words, there is rhetoric in them that you can pick up on' [A3]. This was problematical for the LTS.

The LTS strategic objectives were good but 'perhaps too many and they're overlapping' [A6a]. It 'overlaps with the HR-type staff development' and 'ICT' strategy

too. More importantly, it was complex and its relationship with other strategies made it 'more complex' and 'more difficult it was to actually read and understand' so that most staff did not engage with it [A6b].

Despite the LTS, Alice did not get 'a clear simple statement from the University about teaching and learning' in contrast to 'very strong messages about ... research' [A7]. The University did not appear to her to value learning and teaching in the same way as research and was concerned that it did not 'seem to have a teaching and learning agenda' [A8].

The introduction of priorities for the LTS strategic objectives has 'tended to marginalize the others and perhaps make us even more instrumental than we were' [A50]. It did not make any difference to her School other than meaning 'we don't bother to look at the others' [A47].

Alice could not identify any strategic objectives that had been well met. For her, 'the rhetoric' of student-centred learning 'is well embedded now' but it may be not happening as we would think it should [A16b]. For this and other principles, there are too many definitions and staff 'can't talk to each other with a common understanding'. 'The problem with that is the actual doing of it and the value of it gets lost in the misunderstanding of the debate of whether it is or isn't' [A28c].

The ownership of the LTS was a difficult aspect for Alice with the main problem being a lack of engagement by senior academics within the School. 'If it's not valued and expected at the very top ... it's not going to be valued by the teachers themselves' [A9a]. As a result 'staff priority was always to buy themselves out of teaching [with the TQEF project money] in order to do research of something which was perceived to be more significant and more important for the University and for them in their professional careers in higher education' [A9b]. Alice believes that 'places like this, which is a former polytechnic, should value its teaching much more and actually be proud to be a teaching

institution' [A15b]. 'You know, there are an awful lot of us that don't do RAE-type research or even a great deal of scholarly activity' [A53b].

Alice too identified an issue with some parts of the LTS such as Personal Development Planning (PDP) and employability and the conflation between the two and the perception of external agendas. Alice believed these should be part of 'a teaching agenda' but if it's in the 'employability agenda, it's much easier for staff to dismiss it, and think they have no role in it' [A24]. It is not their agenda and 'if we focus ... purely on employability then the learning becomes instrumental' [A28a].

Another aspect she identified that affects ownership and engagement by staff for the LTS concerns staff time. 'We're very busy all the time so, you know, often validation [or] curriculum enhancement is given to a person or to a small number of people to do and then delivered unto everyone else. I honestly think it's a major problem; how you get people to actually want to spend their time engaged in thinking about teaching and learning, the curriculum, what they're doing when they're assessing' [A31].

However, the LTS has had an impact. Alice considers 'there are some things that are, when we first started, would have been questionable and are now in the ether, so they are just part of the "taken for granted"' [A16a]. 'Over the years, we very slowly but quite strongly, thought about quite significant changes in the way people think and the way they're teaching, and the importance they give to it.' 'It's shifted quite dramatically.'

But recently 'activities have been very much more instrumental and not fully thought through' [A19]. Also, many staff would still describe themselves to those outside of higher education as 'lecturers' or 'working in higher education', or that they 'work in the university', 'or they would talk about the research that they do—'I'm a marketing expert', 'I work in a business school', 'I'm a bioscientist'—but they don't say "I'm a teacher"' [A14].

However, Alice recognized that there are now 'a number of champions for teaching

and learning that have come out of the work' associated with the LTS implementation. 'That has worked well with certain individuals and in certain departments, subject areas where there's been an engagement' [A68].

Alice also opined that 'we've moved quite significantly to change some hearts and minds'. This change didn't 'happen easily; that's the incremental nature of it, and if you got these champions in place every year that goes by, so you're getting a bigger pool of people, [A72]. Alice sees that staff do not 'do exactly the same thing' every year; 'there's lots more engagement with how you might do it differently next year' [A93]. 'The way we talk about teaching and learning has changed. We talk about it, we don't just talk about ... having "poor quality students". We actually engage in discussions about how we might do things differently, and how we might ensure that they're paying attention to the LTS' [A75].

As noted above, Alice saw the implementation practice as 'somewhat of a bureaucratic exercise' [A2a]. 'A big bureaucracy.' There's an action here that creates another need for response here, and we don't get joined up and eventually it seems to leave the whole thing toppling over, because whatever our original idea was, we've lost it' [A20]. 'We finish up with something ... cobbled together ... because ... it has to be done. ... We don't take it seriously enough, because they're not our key targets and we haven't thought it through in good enough time to release people, to identify key people, or to ask people to commit to the taking on board the project' [A53c].

The way forward for Alice was for the LTS to be clearly seen as 'a key University document; that it's very simple in what it's trying to say' and that the central planners have a 'deserved recognition'. Those within the Schools also require the 'recognition to drive it forward' supported by Deans that 'demonstrate the commitment' [A98].

This aspect of responsibility and leadership was highlighted as a concern by Alice. There was not enough 'ownership taken by senior management' within her School (and

others). 'They don't buy into it, its marginal; it's at the bottom of the agenda.' [A51a]

To illustrate, Alice identified the contrast between research and learning and teaching management approaches. 'We have a research 'director' and a teaching 'coordinator" [A51b]. 'The research director is a director and chairs the committee. Our teaching and learning coordinator doesn't chair the committee' [A52].

Alice would like the Dean to be engaged in it LTS; 'just knowing what's going on would be a step in the right direction' [A103]. 'There is no sense of ambition until the Dean owns it and understands it and has a clear sense of what we're trying to do.' [A62]. Alice did not think the Heads of Department knew enough about learning and teaching; they have a 'limited view' and the 'focus on the undergraduate programme is restricting us in our thinking' [A107]. Alice also did not 'get any sense that the Vice-Chancellor is leading us academically' [A99].

So for Alice, LTCs 'should have equal status with the research director, and until you get that kind of message coming across, then teaching will always be the poor relation' [A53a]. 'The person responsible for teaching and learning in the School should be someone with the remit to work with the management group, the Dean, to enhance teaching and learning and to have a clear strategy and policy for it in the School, not just a piece of paper' [A115].

6.4.c A Resistor of Change

Ben had lectured in higher education for 29 years, was a Principal Lecturer in LT and had been his School's LTC throughout the period of TQEF. There had been three changes of Dean in this TQEF period.

The LTS for Ben was 'a strategy document' that had University 'learning/teaching targets' to which the School had to respond [B1]. For him policy and strategy 'are ambiguous' [B2]. However, he did see the 'concept' of strategic objectives as 'very useful

because it's important to have themes and goals', even though initially it 'didn't necessarily reflect' what his School was doing [B5].

The LTS University-wide strategic objectives were considered by Ben as looking after themselves and 'not something I need to bother my head about too much' as 'they didn't really impinge on my working life and my colleagues' working life in the classroom' [B8/9]. He believes these University-wide LTS targets 'have been seen as completely irrelevant' and the School ones are 'difficult to align to practice' [B49]. Unsurprisingly, Ben does not identify any strategic objective as having been well implemented. For him, the related but separate University-wide 'assessment and the feedback review ... has been one of the most successful initiatives' [B9b]. For me this latter initiative was a bureaucratic response to certain poor National Student Survey statistics in assessment and feedback—a response to a 'key performance indicator' (allegedly) rather than one rooted in policy and strategy.

The contrast between the language of the strategy and practice are important. Some staff 'resist the teaching/learning lingo' and appear uncommitted but 'when you investigate what they do, they're extremely good teachers doing some brilliant things and that's an interesting thing that people can do it well and not necessarily sign up to these objectives' [B19]. They need help to 'interpret it into something that is happening in the School' [B21]. As an example of this problem, Ben identified a member of staff 'who's probably done more in his first three years here than a lot of staff do in their lifetimes, but he hasn't got [i.e. focused on] the LTS target and ticking them off [approach]' [B23a]. Despite this Ben identified that he has found staff discussing on School Away Days the same issues in learning and teaching he discusses with other LTCs and other staff; 'the same conversations are being had' [B26c]. I note here that Schools had during the TQEF period devoted time and resource (funded through TQEF) to such collaborative space. School Away Days on learning and teaching were not a phenomenon before LTS and TQEF.

Ben saw the LTS almost as a bureaucratic control process; a way 'to try and get the School management to get aligned' [B23b] and 'one power base telling another power base what they should do … who if they were rebellious Schools presumably would not really want to sign up to them at all' [B24]. That for me is frustrating; the School had not taken ownership of the LTS but instead saw it as a process that they had to simply respond to, in a compliant manner, rather than as a fully functional rational response.

Ben also characterized the National Student Survey being 'used as a stick ... to make Deans ... to get their house in order.

> *We know they're not really important in quality, but actually they're very important in marketing and so that's the statement isn't it, and I think that's made us address this issue and I think that's what made it work' [B64].*

Ben regarded the process as one of trying to align what the School 'intended to do' and what the LTS targets were. 'At the beginning they weren't joined up at all' [B9a]. 'What I was trying to do was match what I knew was happening to what was required and it was just really a game with words. I think the quality of what was happening here was okay but I was usually just picking on a few things and making more of it than perhaps you should because that was the only things that I had that would match' [B61/62]. He would 'dream up a form of words which address targets but with things that I knew were going to happen anyway because I sort of knew what people were doing'. The Dean 'generally didn't talk about it much ... and nobody really seemed to mind what they were as long as it kept you guys quiet.' By 'you guys' he meant the Educational Imitative Centre (EIC), or rather myself, as I received the monitoring reports—but this was on behalf of the Learning policy Review Group that he and others were members and who did the evaluation. Ben identified the only concern for Deans

seem to be when the School targets were considered by the local Campus Management Groups (there were four in all). 'I think it was important that they felt credibility in that group and if they [the Deans] were dropped in it they would be a bit more careful next year' [B58].

He characterized opinions on LTS in the School as, 'Why are they making us do this?' [B26a] and then gave an example about how the objectives got marginalized. The example was Peer Observation, 'a target for quite a long time' that was considered as having 'ground to a halt' and 'impossible to put it on' so that 'nobody was signing up to it any more. If this target is 'pointless so then you think well all the other things must be' [B26b].

However, Ben believed that staff opinion had changed over the TQEF period from initially 'where there seemed a lot of the staff ... saying that our University needs to be marked out ... [as a] research institution' to a position where only 'the occasional person would say that the research is more important' [B194].

The impact of the funds on teaching was identified as a personal experience for Ben. 'Some of our funding' and the equipment bought 'I would say that they've massively changed what has happened in my classrooms. ... [But] I've got this biased view ... about the way we've used the [TQEF] money in the School. I'm sure it could have been used better' [B84].

Ben identified the personal authority afforded to him by 'a group of us sitting round a table from different Schools all realizing there actually was a commitment by some people to good classroom activity and the enthusiasm that you gain from that and knowing that other people have the same sort of problems', which he 'took back into the School ... and started thinking of ways of evangelizing in a sense, of getting this what you perceived as good practice, getting other people signed up to it' [B85]. The personal impact for Ben was important as 'it's opened up a side of my work here which enabled promotion and also some sort of contribution' [B183].

The early years of the TQEF funding and LTS development for Ben was a valuable experience. 'It was like joining a group of like-minded people who were saying ... and were interested in the sort of things that you were. ... You were interested in what they were doing and you were looking over the wall at other places and you realised the University's a bigger place than just the School.' But in later years 'it became a bit of a struggle really, I suppose because it reached a plateau and maybe because it was just me carrying on doing it ... and there didn't seem to be much change' [B176]. This contrasts with Ben's view that 'if we continue the same close correlation between what Schools are actually doing and what the targets want them to do, which is what we're at the moment, I think it will be okay actually. But as soon as they get disjointed again that's going to feed this process of not taking them seriously' [B81].

The impact for Ben was from 'all the add-ons' to the LTS, such as the University Learning and Teaching Symposium. 'You went to [these presentations] and got some good ideas ... [and you] always come away with two or three good ideas you must try' [B86].

Ben also considered the HEA as having a 'big impact' when 'in the end [it] got itself more or less together'. But it was the LTSN—the Subject Network Centres for varied disciplines—that he identifies as effective and for him personally. He recognizes that 'we could possibly make more of that. ... I'm not sure if the University would exploit them as much as we'd like' [B199].

6.5 Vertical Conclusions

These evaluations of the views of the LTCs or former LTCs have provided valuable insights into the implementation of change in an academic environment. The Change Quadrant Model provides a simple device for consideration of the implementation of the LTS during the TQEF period but also for any new initiative into higher education

institutions. It provides what I have labelled the vertical view of individuals involved with the implementation of the LTS; their overview or holistic take on the LTS. The next chapter looks at these views differently; it takes particular aspects of the LTS and its implementation and compares all the LTSs' views on each aspect—a horizontal view.

The evaluation in this chapter has informed the research questions for the inquiry detailed in chapter one (see page 20, A Question of Perspectives). The perceptions of our interviewees are perhaps more varied than might have been expected. To have just two champions for change in a group of individuals critical to the development and implementation of an effective LTS is telling. Are change strategies destined to fail if they are not led in all parts by champions? The answer appears to be (a qualified) 'no' as there are enough adopters to ensure that those that support and activate change are in the majority. Indeed, certain adopters could be champions if they were not disabled by the responses to change in their own Schools. What is more surprising are the significant numbers of resistors for whilst that is expected in members of an organisation in response to change, it is not expected of those that are meant to lead the change. These resistors perhaps took the job for reasons of devotion to learning and teaching—they are good teachers—but perhaps thought their intuitive capability and developing rational perspective were shared by others and a strategy was not required. Perhaps too, they were appointed by their resistant Deans to simply comply rather than lead. The variation of the nature of the resistance of this group is important to recognise. Resistance to change is to be expected as it is a phenomenon in all managed systems. Change can be painful even when accepted as needed. That resistance was shown by those who were appointed to implement the change says more about policy management at higher levels than the LTCs that fall into this category. It was only Edith amongst the LTC interviewees that fully rejected the need for change and was entirely resistant to the implementation. The others did at least in part except the need for change and embraced the policy principles of the

LTS but resisted what they saw as the bureaucratic aspects of implementation. That resistance is part of the response to 'managerialism' (Millar, 1991) and to external directives of government or what has been termed 'steering at a distance' (Middleton, 2000; Vidovich, 2002). All however, as we will see in the next chapter, did identify impact in teaching quality because of the LTS. There is evidence here of the emergent dimension in the academic profession (Nixon, 1996) at the University, one of a status of teaching and dual scholarship, over the dominant dimension of administrative and audit burden. The dominance of the discipline scholar face in this Janus-faced (Piper, 1994, p.2) professionality is being challenged (see page 34) but required the LTS to reveal that learning and teaching face.

This diversity of perspectives amongst the LTCs is of course reflected in the wider diversity of views of staff across the University and very well illustrated by those adopters who are disabled by the resistors in their School—particularly, as we will see in the next chapter, when those resistors are senior academics who manage the Schools.

First and foremost this evaluation highlights the need to develop policy and strategy in a fully collaborative way. To be successful the policy and strategy needs to be owned and valued by most, including the senior managers and the staff who implement the change. A clear understanding of what constitutes a prime strategy and what can be fully owned and translated into an effective functional strategy should be attended to in how any policy is presented (refer to Policy and Strategy: A Primer, page 39).

The contrast demonstrated between the two champions is revealing. One used the detailed mechanics of targets to drive the change even against the resistance of staff. The other used a rational approach and persuasion to get the hearts and minds of staff. The former caused more visible change in the short term but is not certain to see sustained changed. The latter approach showed slow change but is perhaps more likely to yield—has yielded—sustained and embedded change.

This was a perspective on the LTS and its implementation from LTCs. The focus of the next chapter is the perspectives framed around the categories of inquiry that formed the basis of the interviews.

7. Perspectives on the LTS Change

This above all: to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day;
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

William Shakespeare (Hamlet, I, iii)

The research findings—a report on the consensus views and individual views—should be judged against the level of support for the LTS and those of other institutions. The aim here is to understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they work.

One approach to this would be Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). It involves trying to understand an individuals' experiences and how they interpret them (Smith and Osborn, 2004; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This has some parallels in this study. However, IPA is an approach developed by researchers in health, clinical and social contexts within the field of psychology and centres upon individuals' behaviour in the context rather than on the specific context. In this study the goal is to understand the phenomenon of the LTS as an agent of teaching quality enhancement from the point of view of the participants within their social and institutional contexts. The previous chapter had looked at these 'vertical' views; considering each interviewee's views across the different categories of the inquiry.

This chapter is devoted to a consideration of those categories of inquiry that formed the preformed queries of the interviews of the LTCs (see Chapter 5 and Appendix B) and the emergent category of leadership. It is a horizontal view that examines the perspectives on each category of inquiry in turn as it they were revealed in the interviews. My intent here is to let the LTCs interviewed speak for themselves so I do not apologise for the many quotes. These categories, that are considered in turn, are:

a. Policy and Strategy
b. LTS recognition and ownership
c. Process of LTS target attainment

d. The strategic objectives
e. Leadership

7.1 Staff Perspectives by Category of Inquiry

7.1.a Policy and Strategy

The LTS as funded by HEFCE and understood by them and by policy makers (externally and internally) aims to enhance the learning and teaching in the institution. To 'give high priority to developing and implementing learning and teaching strategies which focus on the promotion of students' learning' (recommendation 8; Dearing, 1997). The views of the experts, the LTCs charged with facilitating its implementation within their respective Schools are revealing. As we will see the LTCs did regard the LTS as a guiding or principle document in the main. However, there was a belief by some that this was a governmental controlling device, that there was too much external prescription. Many too disliked the associated bureaucracy and characterised this as disabling. Viewing the LTS as guidance or framework, most considered the strategic objectives as guiding principles. The LTS and its strategic objectives were more policy than strategy and the detailed annual targets (that they helped to produce) were dismissed as unhelpful. The distinction between an enabling prime strategy and a translated functional strategy (see Policy and Strategy: A Primer, page 39) appeared not to be well understood by most LTCs or others. But then my understanding and characterisation of this concept has also been developed through the implementation and evaluation during the TQEF period.

The University's LTS defined its policy in learning, teaching and assessment—it still does. It attempted to provide a stimulus for strategic development; to ensure that the course provision activities were underpinned by common understanding and purpose across the institution whilst providing a framework for course design and validation/review. The University-wide strategy was meant to have acted as a basis upon

which Schools could specify their detailed approaches to their local conditions. The LTS was designed to be non-prescriptive, to allow Schools and other units engaged in supporting learning to translate into their own contextualised and purposeful strategy. The policy component of the LTS was devised to be a statement of values and beliefs in learning and teaching, with the strategic objectives supporting this and acting as a framework for enhancement. It was formulated as a framework for discussing and promoting effective practice in the University's approach to all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and a basis for deliberation of on-going change and development of approaches to learning and teaching in terms of planning, delivery and assessment.

This view of policy as a framework for change rather than as a regulatory mechanism is used to take a greater account of the cultural dimensions of academics acceptance and involvement in the change process.

Our expert LTCs were asked their view on the LTS and many welcomed it as setting guidance or direction for learning and teaching. Typical statements include the following.

> *I think it is a fine strategy and I think it is a fine strategy because it did something we didn't have … which is, we didn't have something that said, these are particularly the sort of things you need to do.* [C5a]

> *I know it's called a strategy, but for me they have been somewhat guidelines which represent, perhaps, a philosophy of an institution that we're trying to follow.* [G2]

> *It's a document giving directions and guidance to some degree not making a very clear distinctions between the obligations and the recommendations.* [C4a]

However, amongst these views of setting a philosophical direction for learning and teaching there was a minority view amongst interviewees and the wider staff population that indicates some degree of suspicion, or worse, over the way the LTS had been imposed upon them. This was stated relatively benign for some:

> *This is the plot but equally implicitly or effectively rather than emphatically sort of saying 'this is the way to get this'.* [F10]

This indicates that, while it may suggest functional approaches to be adopted, there is still full freedom for academics to establish their own translations into strategy. However, there were a substantial minority that were dismissive of the LTS as too much of a bureaucratic exercise:

> *I perceive it as a document that sets a direction for teaching and learning ... But my understanding is that it's part of the bureaucratic systems that operate within the institution.* [A2a]

In the 'context of practice' (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992), higher education professionals translate policies according to the particular context of discipline, institution, time and a myriad of other conflicting and constraining influences. The implication in the statements here is that the LTS is undermined by procedures and processes required for implementation and reporting. As noted previously (Whitlock, 2004b), such prescriptive controls may be viewed as regulation that 'will make knaves and fools of us all' (Enslin, Pendlebury and Tjiattas, 2003, p.15).

The bureaucratic system that surrounds policies and strategies, including the LTS, may cause staff to react in a different way than was intended. This phenomenon is reflected in various comments by the LTCs.

We're a big bureaucracy, there's an action here that creates another need for response here, and we don't get joined up and eventually it seems to leave the whole thing toppling over, because whatever our original idea was, we've lost it. [A20]

It's a document that goes to a committee, and it goes to another committee, and eventually gets some sort of stamp on it and then comes back down to us in the Schools as a sort of guiding principle on which to set our targets. [A2b]

Why do I hate targets? Because they put the attention on the target rather than on what your process is ... [F57]

I think there is a certain 'strategic-ness' in it in terms of you've got to make yourself look good, if somebody gives you targets you are going to meet them. [F61]

At its worse, these suspicions or concerns about the LTS were about external control.

The strategy that the University has devised to explain clearly to staff and to focus staff on various teaching... what the University sees as teaching and learning priorities. Some of which areas set just for the University, but it also involves Government policy ... part of the political agenda.[D22]

The way forward for all parts of the University to make sure things improve, in the views of the learning policy review group, in the views of the University and the in the views of external factors regardless of whether everybody agrees with them or not. [C4b]

This was taken further on occasion.

> *Funding is political so, funding is directed into the universities. I would like to say that Government don't use universities for social engineering, but clearly they do more and more so than over the last twenty years. [D33]*

> *I suppose my view is that it tended very much to come from Government thinking rather than from what we were trying to do within the University. So as the Government produced various buzz words about the way that it wanted university teaching to go, we tended to jump to those. [E15]*

The existence of various initiatives and strategies originating from a number of different sources, internally and externally, at different times and championed by different people has consequences. I refer to this particular type of 'information overload' (Toffler, 1984; Future Shock; a classic book about how people become overwhelmed by change) typical of modern complex organisations as 'strategy sedimentation' (see page 46) when strategies are developed in isolation or incomplete reference to each other and at different times, by different groups of staff, over periods of months or years. It can result in incoherent and ill-phased responses where marginalization and mismanagement may abound.

> *The trouble is that now we have got so many more new agendas set for us out from external sources, that to meet those targets for those agenda setters, we have to say, 'well that way you work doesn't work any longer'. [H96]*

> *There is something that really fascinates me about that kind of a document is how disempowering people can find it. People who are employed for their intellectual capability ... given a list of targets get reduced to 'it's not fair I can't be expected to do all of this'. [F55]*

These are typical statements about the LTS as a strategy representative of this expert group. The LTS was something that was characterised as a 'philosophy' and 'guide' to learning and teaching, that 'gives direction', identifies 'priorities' and raises 'awareness'. But there was perceived to be too much bureaucracy associated with such strategies in a way that undermined the intention. Furthermore, there was the suggestion of a less than benign external and Government influence.

It is apparent that there is much confusion over the terms policy and strategy in general in many businesses and not least that of higher education (see *Policy and Strategy: A Primer*, page 39). We can think of policy as a promise to take a specific course of action or follow specific principles and thereby deliver defined results. The University LTS has policy statements that clearly satisfy this definition. The objectives or results specified were defined in terms that matter to teachers in the University. But these staff cared about more than just the delivery of objectives. They cared about the ability to deliver those objectives in the predicted way. The policy committed the University to achieving objectives in a specific time frame by taking a specific approach. The task of convincing staff that the chosen policy was supported by a solid strategy while preserving as much room for local translation as possible has proved to be a difficult one to fulfil. These difficulties were identified by some of those interviewed.

> *Well, I mean I have a, I have a problem here because I'm never quite clear about the difference between a policy and a strategy. And I don't think anybody, any of our policy documents actually in the institution are policy documents.* [A3]

> *Any strategy is, to me, a strategy needs to be practical action which I think is the idea of what the teaching and learning strategy is.* [D26/8]

They [the LTS targets] look pretty prescriptive to me but they look sort of prescriptive without, you know, any indication of the mechanism by which you would implement them and so I suppose that's the problem. It's like sort of the wish list, isn't it? It seems much more like a wish list than it does seem like something that is practical and, you know, can be implemented without enormous expenditure of resources or time or whatever. [E81]

What distinguishes it from policy is that strategy has in it a sense of future position and moving from one position to a new position and I suppose that is somehow embedded in that strategic document as well as the policy. [J16]

7.1.b LTS Recognition and Ownership

Dearing supported the discipline-based approach '... as a good way of pooling expertise, achieving synergy and securing ownership of products' (Dearing, 1997, p.¶8.32). I interpret this as meaning that for a change strategy to be effective, the individual Schools and the staff within them who are to enact the change should recognise the need and take ownership of the strategy, share their expertise and collaborate. However, as we shall see, the LTC interviewees reported that there was less than a full recognition amongst their own School staff of the LTS. There was little awareness of the detail and for some even of the existence of the LTS. Yet, all staff received their own personal copy of the full policy and strategy each year. Interestingly, the lack of a detailed understanding of the strategic objectives by the experts interviewed was also revealed. That sense that the staff, or at least the experts interviewed, owned and valued the LTS was not fully apparent.

Practice demonstrates that an effective strategy in any change management setting—education or otherwise—needs to fully involve the individuals who implement the

changes and are affected by the changes (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Knight, 2002). A teaching quality enhancement strategy does therefore need to be agreed and owned by the teachers in the University. What did our expert LTCs have to say on this issue? Did the staff in their School engage with and own the LTS?

> *They haven't the faintest idea [about LTS]. That's part of the problem.* [E4/5]

> *[The School] absolutely didn't take ownership but partly because [it was] not really convinced that it would make that much difference or that we were not doing things that we ought to be doing.* [E104]

> *What I find most interesting is that 'unawareness' of some of my colleagues of the strategies and not just not being aware, but not wanting to be aware of it.* [G7]

Asked about the reasons for this lack of ownership or awareness the LTCs gave different reasons. Firstly there is the question of the value placed upon the strategy.

> *If it's [the LTS] not valued and expected at the very top, then the next level and the next level, it's not going to be valued by the teachers themselves, people who are with the responsibility for delivering the business that we're in and when there are arguments, debates, discussions on priorities.* [A9a]

> *I think it is about valuing it. You could say it depends on the regime, having a new Dean who does value it, is great. I suppose also it is the gap between having a strategy and valuing it and what it really means on an everyday basis.* [J34a]

> *[It is a] lack of ownership by lecturers, lack of ownerships by Heads and Deans, lack of ownership by Chancellors, ProVCs and so on, it wasn't just a problem further down.* [C6]

> *It is partly that it has not been rewarded, it has not been valued. There has been this drive to do lots of research which we don't really do enough of.* [J34b]

This lack of ownership of the LTS was more than the value placed upon it by senior academics and others. It was also about what I would include as the academic freedom factor—that professional dimension of academics being responsible and controlling their own work (Freidson, 1994).

> *I think it brought with it and element of one power base telling another power base what they should do in a sense because the targets ... were developed within [a central department] structure and then they would be sent to Schools who if they were rebellious Schools presumably would not really want to sign up to them at all.* [B24]

> *It depends how policies are interpreted. I think people react badly to, 'Here's another strategy. Here's another policy.' People telling us what and how to do things. That would be the response from people in [my School].* [G99]

A very strong feature coming through though was to do with the language used within the strategy. Many staff simply did not relate to the LTS not because they were not committed to quality enhancement but because they did not appreciate the language used. It was not part of their own language; it is a different paradigm from their own subject discipline.

> *We have some staff who resist the teaching/learning lingo and so your impression is that they're not really committed to it at all and you've got to try and work at it. When you investigate what they do, they're extremely good teachers doing some brilliant things and that's an interesting thing that people can do it well and not necessarily sign up to these objectives.* [B19]

> *I think probably a lot of staff would see the LTS targets as being words but in fact I hold some blame there because I've probably got to interpret those words into something, well help interpret it into something that is happening in the School, and it's just at the moment that's so much easier to do.* [B21]

> *I have found my colleagues in the School ... on the whole very, very resistant to an awful lot of the words teaching and learning seem to produce a kind of, almost immediate sort of 'whoa' reaction in them.* [M2b]

Not that this had remained static throughout the TQEF period. Rather, the view that staff have changed over the period in relation to the language of learning and teaching and the approach to enhancement was expressed.

> *The language is used more regularly, the language is used [in my School], the language you find in that strategy.* [J137]

> *In terms of [my] School, the Learning and Teaching Assessment Strategy* [LTS] *is something that we deal with as a whole staff group once a year because it's something that we look at our learning and teaching away day. ... We all get together and that's one of the things, one of our standing items, and we probably spend a couple of hours on it as a staff group.* [L7b]

7.1.c Process of LTS Target Attainment

How were the targets developed and attained within their School? Who took the initiative? Was it a School-wide process or simply the compliant response of the few? This is in large part what affected the recognition and ownership in each School. What we see was a variety of approaches from the merely compliant to the highly strategic.

Every year, as part of the review of the LTS process, University-wide targets were set under each of the strategic objectives. The term 'targets' here is a bit of a misnomer as Schools were required to respond to them, to contextualize them and take ownership of their own strategy. The strategic objectives and targets were conceived by the University policy makers as a guide to what the Schools should consider in their own LTS. These University policy makers, the writers of the targets, were the Learning Policy Review Group that consisted of the Director of the EIC, the TQEF Manager (myself) and the LTCs. The LTCs were asked how, in fact, their School had conducted its response to these targets.

Management of the strategy at the level of the academic School, as revealed in the interviews, was entirely idiosyncratic and did not follow a common theme. The tension between academic autonomy and institutional (not to mention public) management was a factor in the development of the institution's LTS. Clearly, a number of LTCs for much of the time since 2001 were the chief and occasionally only individual within the School devising their action plan.

> *My approach was to try and write something which reflected both what we intended to do and also link with a particular School objective because I was in between two groups of people, the EIC and School, and at the beginning they weren't joined up at all. [B9a]*

[In response to the University-wide targets I would] dream up a form of words which address targets but with things that I knew were going to happen anyway because I sort of knew what people were doing. ... I'd then pass those by [the Dean] who generally didn't talk about it much in a way. ... And nobody really seemed to mind what they were as long as it kept you guys quiet. [B58]

What I was trying to do was match what I knew was happening to what was required and it was just really a game with words. I think the quality of what was happening here was okay but I was usually just picking on a few things and making more of it than perhaps you should because that was the only things that I had that would match. [B61/62]

It falls to me mainly. I take the targets and look at them first and then ... gone to the School Management Group and discussed it and we've agreed it. We'd like to call it X, Y and Z and we need to do particular things within the targets and then I've taken it to the School Learning and Teaching Group which we have here, which we've built up, so that's one member from each Department. We discuss and agree on those targets and then I take them back and I type them up as a proper document and present them to the School Management Group for agreement. [D100/1]

To be quite honest, we would have our aims at the start of the year and we'd tick them off at the end of the year and produce a new set of aims for the next year. But it's a mechanistic exercise. [K23]

It's a completely bureaucratic process. I've got to fill this grid, let's fill this grid, let's put the stuff in there we know we can achieve. [K44]

This seems very bureaucratic; the idea that a central 'master' needed to be persuaded, somehow forgetting that the Schools and the LTCs were part of the policy and strategy making process. Not that the thought of devising a purposeful strategy to meet the needs of a School was alien to all.

> *I had a brilliant learning and teaching committee. It was argued in* [with my increasing] *frustration. At times there were people understanding and following and at times there were people just nodding and hoping it would go away. [C30]*

> *We all worked, we threw ideas from different points of view and all that, it synthesised things and we came up with brilliant plans. These plans were accepted but not really adopted or joined up with anything else that the School were doing, they were just accepted. [C32a]*

> *[The Dean and the HoDs] were not on that [School LT] committee. [Targets were developed by the committee] exclusively. [C42/3]*

> *The action plans will be done at the—we had a bit of a learning and teaching group—it will be done with them and with the course leaders and just with the tremendous will. [F64]*

7.1.d The Strategic Objectives

Were these good objectives? What was well met and not met? The view of these as policy objectives rather than actionable strategic objectives is apparent. The expert interviewees recognised the value of the LTS policy but were less eloquent about the strategic implementation. The LTS with its strategic objectives was recognised as having an impact on learning and teaching quality but in ways that were not readily itemised. The

procedures and approaches adopted to make a change in the approach to learning and teaching are now embedded but are in danger of being marginalised.

The idea of setting strategic objectives as a means to focus enhancement activities was established from the start in 2001. Whilst there has been some modification of these strategic objectives they remained essentially intact throughout the period. What did the LTCs think about these strategic objectives? Which had been well met and which poorly addressed? Interestingly, most of those interviewed were without prompting unable to name all the strategic objectives and yet felt that over time they had all been met to at least some small extent or greater.

> *I think there are some things that are, when we first started, would have been questionable and are now in the ether, so they are just part of the taken for granted. [A16a]*

> *I actually think all of them [are well met] and I do think particularly technology—what was the one, enhanced ...?—and the work placement. [G24/5]*

Student-centred, active learning was the strategic objective that attracted most comment. It was seen by the LTCs as poorly understood in a full strategic manner though the concept was well appreciated. It was viewed as placing increased reliance upon active rather than passive learning, an emphasis on deep learning and understanding, an increased sense of autonomy in the learner, with the role of the teacher becoming that of a facilitator of learning.

> *The rhetoric is student-centric, learning, I think, is well embedded now, I'm not sure that it happens in the way that one might want it to happen. [A16b]*

I think the weakest [strategic objective] is 'student-centred, active learning'. That's a term which causes confusion, unnecessarily because it's often what we do. [D58a]

Whether I could measure and actually count and give you chapter and verse, but there are people who are out there thinking this [student-centred learning objective] is quite exciting. [J57]

People now do not want to be viewed as teaching in a way which is not student-centred, and is not considered to be active learning. So I think the battle on the whole has been won, it's now a case of trying to push people through the practical aspects of it. [L84]

Student-centred, active learning is both a philosophical approach to teaching as well as having strategic implications. Is it really, as some LTCs state, 'well embedded' and a 'battle won' with all staff approaching their teaching in this way? Other LTCs have stated the approach as 'exciting' and 'confusing', which implies to me that it is not understood at all. Certainly I personally have observed a tendency in certain areas still to use the period of time with students labelled as the 'lecture' as a time for a didactic or transmission form of teaching. Others may describe interactions with their students in lectures in terms of questioning their knowledge and understanding but this is so often restrictive in format so that the engagement is primarily with the capable or confident students. In a multicultural, multi-capable student body the cultures of learning and the cultures of teaching the students have experienced can make full student-centred learning approaches difficult to pursue. There is evidently a great need then for a more strategic approach. For me this is a question of course teams exploring the dimensions of their learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Yet such collaboration is rarely recognised or valued, at least in terms of imperatives from senior staff and imaginative facilitation of

opportunities. Many staff on the modern modular courses, because of workload pressures seemingly work in their own silos, without enough communication with other staff on the course, operating with somewhat different approaches to learning and teaching and consequently presenting a fragmented or incoherent learning experience for their students. Do they share a single culture of learning teaching with shared philosophy and approaches? How can they if they have no time to interact, share and collaborate? The University LTS has failed in this regard.

Newer initiatives tended to provoke much more resistance or were even more misunderstood. Of the former, Personal Development Planning (PDP) and employability attracted some comment. Of the latter it was linking teaching and research (the teaching informed and enriched by research initiative).

> *There are too many definitions of PDP and what it might be. And that means we can't talk to each other with a common understanding. ... And I think that the problem with that is the actual doing of it and the value of it gets lost in the misunderstanding of the debate of whether it is or isn't. [A28c]*

> *I think we're still struggling to an extent with employability and personal development planning. When people are under pressure, employability and PDP is, although fundamentally important in terms of their students' academic development, people just think, 'Oh look, we're at breaking point anyway, so trying to deal with this, how can we.' [L120]*

But,

> *I think employability is working well in this School. [D60b]*

However,

> *I think that one [strategic objective] I find hardest to explain or make clear for staff is 'teaching and research links' because that happens on so many different levels. [D58b]*

The University's commitment to skills and employability in the curriculum is embodied in its mission statement and contained within the LTS. Further to this, the University, in line with other HEIs, is committed to the availability of PDP for all students. This policy was initially developed jointly by UUK, the Standing Conference of Principals (now GuildHE) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in collaboration with the higher education community, student and employer representatives in response to recommendations of the 1997 National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing, 1997). The objectives of the PDP process relate explicitly to student development; to improving the capacity of students to understand what and how they are learning, and encouraging them to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning. Currently all academic Schools in the University have developed their PDP processes in a variety of ways, as integrated parts of their curriculum and/or through a variety of academic means (Whitlock, 2005, 2010). Some of these measures are more mature than others having been based upon former good practice or professional requirements. The best have student reflection on learning as the primary process. Many of these processes are still undocumented and not seen (or 'badged') as PDP.

Some of the LTCs also commented upon the prioritisation of three of the objectives in 2007. This approach was a response by the Learning and Teaching Committee to the view that there were too many strategic objectives.

I don't think it [setting priority strategic objectives] has made any difference to us, it's just actually, to my understanding, the difference it's made is we don't bother to look at the others. [A47]

It's pretty interesting how things develop in isolation; they don't actually develop in any holistic way. [K11]

The strategic plan for learning and teaching with a clearly set series of coherent objectives had been seriously disrupted by the committee charged with its implementation!

Despite all of these difficulties in implementation the LTCs did report on the impact of the LTS and TQEF on the quality of teaching in their Schools. One LTC, Colin (one of our Champions), used a metaphor about change in quality enhancement of teaching that I find widely applicable and amusingly appropriate (see C13b on page 94). He related the varied approach to teaching quality enhancement in his School to a caterpillar with the front legs running (the innovators), the middle legs walking (responding to the innovators and the sharing of practice) and the back legs static and holding back further enhancement.

This LTC's metaphor about change in quality enhancement of teaching recognizes that many staff (the front legs), even without an LTS, were and are very professional and innovative in their teaching. It implies that the LTS has given a voice to such individuals and enabled the sharing of practice and collaboration for development that previously was rare. That is in itself enhancement, sharing and collaborating, but it has brought in a wider group—the 'middle legs'—who gain expertise from this sharing and collaboration that previously they were denied.

Most LTCs considered that the implementation of the LTS has had impact but that it is a slow process implying a culture shift in approaches to learning and teaching that is

adopted by more staff over a sustained period. Statements from the LTCs typical of this include:

> *My personal opinion is that we are at the moment taking on, over the years, we very slowly but quite strongly, thought about quite significant changes in the way people think and the way they're teaching, and the importance they give to it. [A19]*

> *We have a lot more people active in learning and teaching development, people who would normally believe that the only thing they need to do is stay current with the discipline. The fact that you need to develop on your discipline but you also need to develop as a lecturer. [C50]*

> *I think [the LTS strategic objectives] does [make a difference] because even though people may not take notice, unconsciously they will because they keep reading this term [student-centred learning] and I've heard people using the term more and more than they did in the past. [G20]*

> *We've moved quite significantly to change some hearts and minds, to coin a phrase. Change doesn't happen easily, that's the incremental nature of it, and if you got these champions in place every year that goes by, so you're getting a bigger pool of people. [A72]*

> *These thinking creative people who have started coming up with ideas and when we introduce a new development fund it was interesting in the first year ... almost everybody put in things that they wanted to do or to go to conferences ... on ... learning things. [C51b]*

Quite a lot of members of staff have focused more how they can teach students, that it was recognized that we weren't teaching certain things well enough, for example. [G68a]

People genuinely now want to be thought of as good teachers. [L36]

But this has not been a simple shift in the culture of learning and teaching and many academic staff in the Schools did not recognise such changes as they expressed their irritation with what they considered a bureaucratic interference in their teaching. LTC statements reflect this wider view.

Does it inform what we do? I think it does, I think for some staff they will see it as something of a top down irritation, because they will see it more as a 'have we met a target', but I don't think that necessarily is a bad thing, because in some respects the irritation comes from having to engage with something and I think the broader aims of the Learning and Teaching Strategy actually have become so accepted, that in some ways if the irritation is purely at the level of 'Oh have we done what we said we would do? Can we put a tick next to it?' [L8]

And it's still not where I'd like it to be. It's shifted quite dramatically, I think, since we started this, however many years ago it was. I think more recent activities have been very much more instrumental and not fully thought through. [A19]

Added to these bureaucratic irritations there was recognition too of those other corporate and logistical factors that impact upon quality enhancement activities.

I think the biggest drivers of change in terms of what it taught, how it's taught and when its taught has been nothing to do with this

> *[LTS], but has to do with the modifications of the timetable, the significant number of students who would not meet a historical expectation of being prepared to do Higher Education study, and I think those have led to changes. [H79]*

In this consideration, the broader, sustained impact of the LTS on teaching quality enhancement it is worthwhile returning to Colin's caterpillar metaphor.

> *The top 50% of the School have improved–let's go back to the caterpillar— the people on the top who were the innovators [now] found it much easier to innovate and have improved much further in my view because of the policy* [LTS]. *The people in the middle who normally would have done nothing have done a few things, have got an understanding of some things that happen nationally, some issues that they were not aware of. [C68]*

> *The back legs I don't think have been touched, I don't think they care, I don't think they understand anything. I have somebody who runs a very key module, very large module in the School who has been around for a very long time, if you asked him what CASG* [an academic standards group] *was he wouldn't know and this is something that has been embedded in the last eleven years. [C70]*

The skills and employability strategic objective was initially separated into two. By 2005 it was one strategic objective and the related targets have changed over the years. The skills strategy had a difficult start in 2001, when the typical response of academics to including skills in their curriculum was highly resisted. I recall well one colleague saying to me 'I don't teach skills, I teach biochemistry'. The term 'skills' to many staff was one

that related to what many might now call soft skills, even basic literacy and numeracy or associated with training (a dirty word in higher education). However, the strategy did become recognised and valued when staff were asked (and required in validation documents) to consider the outcome graduate skill capabilities they develop with their students. Many still struggle with this but recognise that much of their own good practice has included such dimensions even if they had not formalised it with themselves or their students. The 'hidden curriculum' when recognised, formalised and used as a framework for course curriculum design is compelling and effective.

Debates about the links between research and teaching in higher education have raged for a long time. In practice, the link is not explicitly addressed in many higher education courses (Jenkins *et al.*, 2003). There are a number of aspects to the debate, but the importance of fostering students' research skills and capabilities is one that is often part of the hidden curriculum, that is often ill-considered by course teams and not implicit in the course learning and teaching strategy. The strategic objective on teaching informed and enriched by research (TIER) was seen as helping to realise approaches to developing students' research skills and capabilities.

> *Certainly we've thought a lot more about teaching informed and enriched by research … we've thought about it in relation to validations and new courses … because we're quite strong on research in our School … so I think, whether it's come from that, the sort of pressure from the researchers to get their work into the curriculum or whether it's come from knowing that that is a target across the University and something that we'll be judged by, I'm not sure, but certainly the two have come together to make it a much more, you know, important area of discussion than it's ever been before. [E77]*

Though, for some, it was another marginalised aspect of the LTS.

> *The one* [LTS strategic objective] *that is least understood is teaching informed enriched by research. ... But it isn't poorly met, I don't think it is understood and articulated and taken as far as it can be. [F41/2]*

For many, the existence of the LTS and the debate that it caused, particularly in the context of the on-going monitoring and review of courses and the design of the curriculum for validation, as well as the sharing of practice it affords, has improved the quality of the teaching.

> *It was all the add-ons, like the* [University Learning and Teaching] *Symposium. You went to* [these presentations] *and got some good ideas, ...* [you] *always come away with two or three good ideas you must try. [B86]*

> *We have disseminated some very good ideas, I mean, things on personal teaching that have been done, things on e-mentoring that have been done, things on using technology to solve problems, things that we have done on automated feedback, things that we have done, brilliant ideas that we have developed because of this strategy. [C21b]*

> *I think that staff are generally concerned about their basic quality of teaching and the syllabus of their module. [D67/8]*

This implies that it is not the detailed targets and associated bureaucracy of the LTS that are of real importance but the change in the culture of learning and teaching that the strategy helped to facilitate. Despite or because of the LTS, academics from within their

own interpretive communities have discovered an imaginative discourse in pedagogy that is enhancing the quality of teaching in universities and modernising the profession as a result. The motivated response of lecturers in higher education has enhanced their professionality and the cultural shift can now be identified a more embedded feature of professional life.

> *It's a better culture of dissemination of good practise. I think that even if we* [the LTCs] *disappear, this thing has worked, this thing will continue having people not doing it on their own but going outside and saying let's do a demonstration and show you. I think that's worked. [C14]*

> *The whole thing would disappear and be undone if the money disappeared? No, I think a lot of it will stay, I don't think we would have had in* [our discipline] *five learning and teaching fellows if it wasn't for the last eight years of having the money and pushing things because a lot of talent that we knew we slowly supported. When you support somebody and you can go the following year and say let's have a chat about what you have done and let's see how you are going to go forward even without the money. [C58]*

> *I think we are now at a point where teaching ... in the* [my] *School, teaching, learning and assessment is viewed as part of the professional project, as opposed to a necessary evil that you have to do in order to buy the time to do something else. [L30]*

However, there is a warning that without a focus for such professional approaches there is a danger of the culture not being maintained.

> *You need things that actually trigger your reflection and contain it and help you help that discussion personally and in groups. You need*

> *ways from the University, to show you what you are doing well. ... I've said that people see* [the LTS strategic objectives] *in fear and loathing but equally we can use it to say 'look this is the expectation, we're way up here, way above it'. A benchmark is a benchmark and you need to know what they are and where they are. [F76]*

In this respect future development and engagement with the LTS post-TQEF is seen as crucial.

> [The LTS should be seen as] *a key university document, that it's very simple in what it's trying to say and that the people who are delivering on it, the EIC, have a recognition (that they deserve), and that the people who are trying to implement in the Schools have the recognition to drive it forward, and that the Deans should demonstrate the commitment. [A98]*

> *It is not changes in the strategy, its changes in the way it is communicated, the way it is communicated so, the status it is given. I suppose there is so much information that comes out for people, so many documents, so it needs to be given its rightful place as it being the heart of everything we do, it being our reason for existence as opposed to being something that is on the side. [J186]*

> *I think at the point when it's truly got to where it needs to go, and I think it's probably getting pretty close, it's the point at which people can look at them and say, 'Yes but we do this here, we're doing this here, we're doing that, actually we've gone a stage further than that, because, and we can feed that back.' [L72]*

> *To improve things in the School, I would look for a generic teaching and learning strategy ... which enables a properly constituted*

coordinator... for teaching and learning, to be able to, with some status behind them, say to other members across the School 'We've got to improve things, it isn't great, don't be complacent, don't think you're all good as you think you are because you aren't, this is how we could possibly improve things, let's have a dialogue about it and let's implement something.' Because nothing like that ever happens. [K74]

Places like this which is a former polytechnic, should value its teaching much more and actually be proud to be a teaching institution. [A15b]

There is an awful lot of good. Perhaps I think one of the difficulties for many of us, is firstly finding the time to reflect, we still have the problems finding the time to reflect but having a process that requires at least a modicum of reflection does mean that you have to find time to build that in. You do actually have to sit round with senior and junior staff, with managers and non-managers, with visiting lecturers, and say, 'Right, come on then, where do you think you do this then?' and, 'How do you do it?' and, 'How could you improve it?' [L18/9]

If it was more of a bottom-up process you'd get more engagement and greater likelihood of change for the better than in the present system and I know everything's been put in place to try and make sure it is that but ... it certainly hasn't worked in our School and it might be because of the individuals involved. I'd never discount that really. It might also be just the process itself seems very separate. [E156b]

Making teaching as important as research is how it should be. It's fundamental. I don't know why it's [a position of LT Director] never been done. [K20/1]

I think it has got to be changed by somebody becoming the new learning and teaching supremo with a proper status, linked to senior management authority who can stand up and say 'We've got to improve our teaching.' [K40]

Lacking some kind of ownership or understanding or whatever from senior management that was lumbered to the same committee and I think that was something that in the future we need to fix. [C16b]

7.1.e Leadership

Did senior academics within the School (Dean and Heads of Department) take leadership responsibility for the LTS? Did other leaders (Course Leaders, Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Study) take responsibility? Were they enabled to do so? As indicated previously, leadership is a key theme in the analysis that follows.

It was John F Kennedy (1917-63) who said that 'Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other'. A different nuance and context of course but in my view the role of School senior academics—Deans and Heads of Department—is to provide academic leadership. By extension then, the promotion and facilitation of quality enhancement in learning and teaching is central to their role. What we have seen already in the course of this inquiry and reflected in the statements from the expert group of LTCs and former LTCs is that leadership in this respect has been found wanting.

I don't think there's enough ownership taken by senior management within the Schools. Within my School anyway. They don't buy into it, its marginal; it's at the bottom of the agenda. I'm interested that we have a research 'director' and a teaching 'coordinator'. [A51]

[Deans and HoDs] *are too focused on budgets and budget management rather than teaching, because I would put academic*

> *leadership not only with discipline but also with the development of the people. [C83]*

> *The Dean never signed up, you might know, to the* [LTS]. *...He was not a fan of it. He thought it was top-down, that it didn't address the real issues that we were facing in delivery and so there was never the impetus from him ... to make it integral to the School's activities. [E50a]*

Far from being viewed as academic leaders it appears from perspective of the majority of the LTCs that many Deans and Heads of Departments are focused on corporate management. Not that the senior academics were thought to be entirely responsible for this state of affairs. As we have seen, Colin (and others) 'don't think it's the fault of those people' [C29c]. They simply did not have the developmental training needed.

The governance of universities in the modern world is more akin to running a business than simply having academic oversight of learning as was the case in previous times for Deans and Heads. In my view, academic leadership in learning and teaching is instead now vested in the course leaders. This is noted too in Colin's type summary narrative (page 93 and below) and by others. But this academic leadership role of course leaders is barely recognised by senior academics; or valued in the support of the role and in the development of the course leadership capability.

> *Well I'd like* [the Dean] *to be engaged in it* [LTS]. *From where I'm at, just knowing what's going on would be a step in the right direction.* [A103]

> *I think* [my School's] *practices and its senior management and School management group and all the rest have been very piecemeal*

in the way they do everything. They solve the problem after the event rather than anticipate. [J37b]

The thing about management activities is it almost prescribed, it's controlling but the framework exists and leadership is more about envisioning some sort of movement. [J160]

It is not that they cannot manage; they don't have anything to manage. So the 'it' that they're managing, I don't think that has been articulated. So again it is this context free environment. They are just leading in a dark tunnel. … that is an issue of leadership. [F96]

The view appears to be, despite the years of development of the University LTS, that senior academics (Deans, Heads of Department) have not taken ownership of the strategy, have not implemented it in a proactive and coherent way, and do not even, according to these views, recognise its importance.

You see isn't it interesting that learning and teaching has become a University strategic requirement but at senior management campus level it's not seen that way. [H58b]

I need a champion, if I've got a Dean … that will champion this, then I get time to be listened to and that percolates to other people. We have to give a bit of time to this person and what they are saying. [H59]

The LTCs of course have been the main leads for teaching quality enhancement in the Schools. But their ability to lead has been helped and hindered in various ways.

I mean, it's very hard in our School which is like the Balkans. You know, we have many, many different ways of doing things and people

don't talk to each other and they don't accept that... there is a common approach and there isn't in fact, there are very, very different ways of doing things. [E188]

We ... have got a number of champions for teaching and learning that have come out of the work of the EIC, the learning policy, having a teaching and learning coordinator. I think that has worked well with certain individuals and in certain departments, subject areas where there's been an engagement. [A68]

I'm not sure I've been particularly effective in the School ... it's probably a personalities thing as well, but also our Dean has been fairly good, I've rumbled away at it and tried to encourage people. [B85]

There is no sense of ambition until the Dean owns it and understands it and has a clear sense of what we're trying to do. [A62]

The ... back end [of the caterpillar] *weren't only people stuck at the top of the SL, they were also people who were in very senior positions in the School. [C74]*

Academic leadership within Schools then is not recognised as existing with the senior academics, the Deans and Heads of Department. It is the course leaders who are the true academic leaders. Not that this is formally recognised, supported and developed.

I think ... that is a weakness and maybe the answer to that is actually you direct all this through the programme leaders, the undergraduate and postgraduate programme leaders. You know, they are the people right there grappling with these issues, managing teams often, you

know, without any sort of true acknowledgement of that in terms of their status and grading in the institution, you know, but they're the people right there who really need that support. [E162/3]

Course leaders ... quite a demand has been put on those I think over the years here, so they've become probably more significant in terms of managing what's happening. [B165]

This is perhaps a hidden place where you do share good practice because all the course leaders come together and talk about—it's often about just sharing the issues that have come up, but then also finding solutions together. [G97]

The thing that was quite encouraging for me was the fact having gone through all of this frustration [with] *management, to go and reach the ... course leaders in the team. Most of them were running with it, they were willing; they were really hungry to have this flexibility to do things. [C37]*

The professional approach of many course leaders is identified here despite the lack of a formal recognition and support. There is no explicit value placed on the role of course leader and little recognition of the complexity of this role in the formal structures of the University.

I think people don't aspire to be course leaders because all they see is their colleagues struggling with the admin. [G112a]

The structure is such, we have always allowed people to develop their modules so the course leadership and its role, it curriculum, it's only a time of validation re-validation that the course leaders start being

responsible for the curriculum. [J166]

I think there are leaders within. I think module leaders probably exercise academic leadership more than course leaders. Course leaders are administrative roles. [J162]

I want to return to that business metaphor again. The quality of the product—taught provision, the courses—in the University is its core business and the role of the team leader—course leader—in this is crucial. Yet, course leaders are appointed without any formal preparation other than their experience and with no on-going development. There is no succession training. The University requires novice research supervisors to follow a formal development pathway and provide an education course for them. This is not the case for course leaders. Many academics regard teaching as an intuitive process such that knowing your subject is sufficient to make you a good teacher. There are many good intuitive teachers or restricted professionals (Hoyle, 1974) that provide a valuable learning experience for their students. However, that intuition alone makes a good teacher is a falsehood and it is a falsehood that is applied to course leadership too. If you have taught on a course for a period—and in some instances in my experience that appears to be less than one academic year—then you can lead the course. This is an even greater falsehood and has great implications for the quality of learning and teaching.

7.2 Horizontal Conclusions

These evaluations of the views of the LTCs or former LTCs on the categories of inquiry have provided further valuable insights into the implementation of change in an academic environment. The LTS Change Quadrant Model introduced in the previous chapter identified the different ways that the LTCs and by extension staff within the University responded to the LTS and its implementation. This chapter refines the view that LTCs or

others belong simply to one category or other in all aspects of the LTS change project.

In the last chapter we did see that all LTCs demonstrated the characteristics of the Champion or lead type category with the exception of Edith. In exploring the categories of inquiry, the use of strategic objectives as the prime strategy is effective in enabling quality enhancement. The detail of the functional implementation of the prime strategy was not the key to enhancement. Rather the prime strategy provided the framework and the permission for academics to engage in teaching quality enhancement. Chiefly this happened through the engagement and the discourse around issues in learning and teaching and not through a detailed functional strategy. This does not invalidate the LTS but rather provides further understanding of how change can be best facilitated in an academic environment—and perhaps elsewhere. It is not enough that prime strategies should be writerly (Barthes, 1977) but that they are owned by those who implement them and that the way in which they can be implemented—through translation to context and a functional strategy—is understand across the institution. This chapter has further indicated the importance of strategy ownership and leadership. This is particularly from the top, the senior academics in the institution.

8. Achieving Teaching Quality Enhancement

How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

William Shakespeare (The Merchant of Venice, IV, i)

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I shall be considering the findings from this inquiry; how it informs the success of LTS change project and the lessons that can be learnt for the future. Before embarking on the detail of this I should state that my overarching conclusion is that the TQEF and the Learning and Teaching Strategy have had a beneficial impact on the quality of learning and teaching at the University of Westminster. The key findings in this inquiry are that ownership of strategy, the champions of change, communities of practice and supportive leaders all enable change whereas a compliance culture and operational details inhibit change. The TQEF has promoted change and enhancement in teaching in the University but this is not self-sustaining. I regard there as having been a cultural shift, not seismic but a notable change, in which teaching is more highly regarded by the majority of staff as a rational endeavour and a valid professional pursuit. Academic staff are more open to sharing their practice and collaborative communities of practice are more common. These beneficial cultural changes as well as some of the supporting processes of the LTS and teaching quality enhancement that were features of the project are embedded in practice and will be sustained by those who champion this collaborative and strategic approach. The LTS change project has not been without its difficulties as there was resistance to the idea that there was a need to adopt anything more than the continued intuitive approaches to teaching. That resistance, and the continuation of the dominant dysfunctional management approaches to quality enhancement, endangers the LTS in a post-TQEF era without direct ear-marked funding. Those advances made in

teaching quality enhancement are in danger of being eroded and the LTS of becoming marginalised without continued endeavours. But first I shall return to the research questions (page 20) and determine to what extent they have been answered and then move on to exploring the various matters that have arisen during the inquiry.

8.2 Questions Answered

1. *What are the LTCs' perceptions of learning and teaching at the University of Westminster and the impact of the implementation of the institutional LTS?*

Prior to 2001 (the introduction of TQEF) many academics in higher education did not accept the title of 'teacher'; they were 'lecturers'. Many were engaged in innovative and high quality teaching but there was little sharing of practice or collaboration within universities let alone between them. The TQEF and LTS have changed this noticeably not just in my own view (see 8.3 Professional Role and Insider impact, page 146, for a perspective on this) but as reported by our LTCs, even the resistors. The champions and adopters—LTCs and other academics—have had their enhanced approaches recognised and encouraged. The sharing of practice is more common place and collaborative communities of practice within and between universities are now common (see 8.4 Communities of Practice, page147). The scholarship of learning and teaching and dual scholarship are more widely recognised. However, importantly, it was not the detailed statement of policy or strategy in the LTS that did this—and we have seen that the University of Westminster in common with many others is still not very good at this—but the recognition of good teaching and the sharing and collaboration that it afforded. Enhancement of teaching has occurred (see 8.5 Enhancement of Teaching Quality, page 151). Not that this is perceived by all staff; the resistors do not see the need or accept the benefits of an LTS though they may now more readily collaborate. Many senior academics apparently also do not fully perceive

this for as we have seen they continue to show little imagination in creating the space for collaborative communities of practice and in the worse cases they too are resistant to the LTS.

2. *How do they view the impact of the institution's LTS on the teaching role and the quality of teaching?*

The champions and adopters of change for teaching quality enhancement emerged and were provided with recognition, authority and the means to bring about change by the funding and the LTS. Adopters have recognised the need for a strategic approach to teaching quality enhancement but were partially and variably thwarted in the fulfilment of that enhancement. Despite this, impact within all Schools and departments was identified by the LTCs (see 8.5 Enhancement of Teaching Quality, page 151). Resistors are in denial of the benefits of the enhancement activities afforded by the LTS. The LTS has caused a cultural shift in approaches to learning and teaching (see 8.7 Summary Findings and Recommendations, page 153). Whilst many still take an intuitive approach, they share and collaborate more than they previously did as the LTS has allowed them to give voice to their approaches. There are more staff engaged in evidence-informed practice and more scholarly approaches to their teaching—they are more extended professionals. However, to paraphrase one of the LTC's imaginative metaphors (page 94), not all the caterpillar legs are yet moving.

3. *What do they consider is required to improve the LTS to make it sustainable and more effective?*

Whilst not well articulated in the terms I have argued in Chapter 4 the LTCs do see the need for better articulated policy and strategy and processes required for better functional strategies. More importantly and almost universally (Edith being the exception) they

lament the poor engagement and management of LTS functional strategy development and implementation by senior academics within the University and their Schools. The ownership of the LTS by all staff starts with the senior academics and without that the changes needed to establish an enhancement culture are ill-formed and not sustained. Only the strong champions can continue to be effective in this scenario though with less effect than would otherwise be possible. The adopters are not supported and their approaches will falter; their Schools' strategy for learning and teaching will not be sustained.

8.3 Professional Role and Insider impact

I had shared views variously with LTCs as they have come and gone from the role as well as with senior academic leaders. Those shared views are evident in the nature of the recorded interactions with the LTCs that form the core of the data for this inquiry. This is a situated theory approach (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989). Has my insider position and perspective skewed the data? Establishing the views of those who matter in a way that can lead to generalisation—letting the researched 'speak for themselves' (Pring, 2000)—I believe has minimised any skewing of the data. The voices of the LTCs are plainly evident in chapters 6 and 7. I have not put words into their mouths.

Since the ending of TQEF HEFCE ear-marked money we (that is myself and my Director in the Educational Initiative Centre) were able to argue for a continuation of funding by top slicing from the Schools teaching income to support teaching quality enhancement initiatives. This is much less than was previously allocated in the TQEF but at least we were able to maintain a continued commitment by the University to recognise and support enhancement.

Perhaps more significantly we won the argument to establish the role of Director of Learning and Teaching in each School. Not simply a 'coordinator' (an LTC) but a post of

equal stature to that of the Director of Research. However, this has not been without the same misunderstanding of importance and role as each School has appointed individuals with very different job roles and positions. These vary from Associate Dean in one School to little more than a quality assurance lead in others. The opportunity to create a body of individuals with a primary University role to lead on LTS and teaching quality enhancement working together and with their own School champions was lost. The lessons from the TQEF period on change management and the nature of situated knowledge through communities of practice were not learnt by the University. That was a major frustration for me as it became apparent that my views on the formulation of LTS and its development and implementation through collaborative communities of practice would not be realised.

8.4 Communities of Practice

During the course of the TQEF project it became evident to me at an early stage that any activity however formulated for the implementation of an LTS strategic objective, was effective when it involved staff coming together to discuss issues in learning and teaching and to share practice.

John Hattie in *Visible Learning for Teachers* (2012) developed his earlier work on evidence-based practice for teachers in compulsory-age schools. He too identifies 'one of the major messages ... is the power of teachers learning from and talking to each other' (Hattie, 2012, p.60). This understanding was evident with all the LTC champions and adopters. These engagements on issues in learning and teaching led to a shared understanding of needs, effective approaches and of course further development and innovation in teaching. Wenger (1998) describes this process of collective learning by practitioners as a 'community of practice' engaged in a 'shared domain of human endeavour'. Wenger (2006) states that:

> *Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.*

Passion and an appetite for sharing, collaboration and development were not obvious before TQEF but despite the individual approach to professional development being dominant, the appetite to share was there. Academics have a fragmented professional self or split focus (Morley, 2003, p.100) with the many demands upon their activity including research, quality assurance and the logistics of managing in such a super-complex world (Barnett, 2000). The epicentre of their professional self at any particular time shifts in part according to the presence of an enabling influence. For quality assurance that might be institutional audit or annual monitoring; for research it is now the Research Excellence Framework (REF). It was the LTS and TQEF that created an influence that allowed their professional teacher self to come into focus.

At the end of the first full year of TQEF funding, 2001, I organised the 1st Annual Westminster Learning and Teaching Symposium to disseminate the funded activities and celebrate excellence in learning and teaching. I was a little nervous that none would want to present and, if they did, that there would be few staff who wanted to attend. However, that first and every Learning and Teaching Symposium since has been oversubscribed for presentations and attended by over 200 staff. There are still what I call dark corners of the University that do not fully engage, but the Learning and Teaching Symposium and other collaborative events do shine a light into those corners and have a cascading impact on learning and teaching. Resistance to the LTS and strategic objectives was, ever so slowly, eroded when academic staff saw their colleagues in their own Schools or others engaged in developmental activities that concerned how they work and what they do in their professional teaching role. They want too that recognition for what they have been doing

in isolation and rejoice that they can focus on that part of their professional self.

The LTS promoted this culture and gave the champions and the adopters a voice and authority. However, the LTS was not formulated in this way. It had not been organised or even perceived as a change project delivered through collaboration. But as staff met to discuss issues in the implementation of the LTS strategy this was when collaboration happened. It was an unseen consequence, or as Lave and Chaiklin (1993, p.5) state, 'learning is ubiquitous in on-going activity, though often unrecognized as such'. The University LTS funded by TQEF facilitated communities of practice but the gain realised from this was seen by most staff—and notably, as it affected subsequent strategy development, the academic lead managers—as a consequence of the strategy alone rather than the engagement of the practitioners in their shared passion. In discussing situated learning such as this Brown, Collins and Duguid assert (1989, p.32) 'knowledge is situated, being in part a product of the activity, context, and culture in which it is developed and used.'

The relationships forged during this facilitated engagement needed to be built upon with a continued capability and capacity for the communities to meet. This was rarely the case beyond the individual LTS strategy activity. As reported in chapters six and seven, senior academic managers needed to recognise the importance of providing academics with the means to enhance their participation in communities of practice.

As I head a department that hosts the initial teacher training awards for nine college collaborative partners I can draw a parallel from the Lifelong Learning Sector. The Institute for Professional Learning (IfL; the professional body in the sector) in their review of continuing professional development identified five key priorities including to 'develop a recognised professional learning culture in the sector, based on reflection, planning, action and evaluation' (Institute for Learning, 2010, p.7). Those familiar with the debate on the scholarship of learning and teaching in higher education (e.g. Boyer,

1990; Schulman, 1993; Healy, 2000; Trigwell *et al.*, 2000; Healey, 2002; Whitlock, 2006b) will recognise IfL's model of dual professionalism in which the development of approaches to learning and teaching is recognised alongside that of discipline expertise and learning policy appreciation. The professional standards framework in higher education (recently renewed; Higher Education Academy, 2011) also clearly identifies the importance of scholarship in learning and teaching. That framework purports to promote professional approaches to support student learning 'through creativity, innovation and continuous development' (Higher Education Academy, 2011, p.2).

These professional bodies whilst recognising scholarship in learning and teaching and implicitly supporting academic engagement in this domain do not necessarily cause institutions to facilitate communities of practice or professional approaches to support student learning. It is implicit in the frameworks that this is an individual professional standard and engagement in the quality enhancement of teaching to improve student learning and experiences is a voluntary act. As this inquiry clearly demonstrates, an effective approach for quality enhancement involves good management and leadership to allow the full and effective realisation of individual professional goals and institutional strategic objectives in learning and teaching. Again, from the Lifelong Learning Sector, the 157 Group of further education colleges research report on 'Leading Learning' notes 'the importance of creating a supportive and enabling culture in the organisation' and working 'collaboratively to help develop a shared ... view of good practice in ... teaching and learning' (157 Further Education & Skills Group, 2011, p.9). The report also highlights the need to 'provide more opportunities for strategic leaders to debate and discuss approaches to the leadership of learning'. The seminar that resulted from this report identified the need to investigate 'the types of support that leaders can provide to promote innovation and best practice in teaching and learning' (Institute for Learning, 2012, p.5).

The common understanding of how academics approach learning and teaching and the dominant management approaches of workload allocation do not accord with the way academics work or could work more effectively, with greater shared understanding and with innovation. It ignores the significant learning and innovation generated in the informal communities of practice in which academics work when this is recognised and facilitated. This inquiry demonstrates that workload management and teaching quality enhancement need to be reassessed in the context of communities and practices that support the effective implementation of LTS policy and strategic objectives.

8.5 Enhancement of Teaching Quality

That teaching is central to a university's mission is axiomatic. However, the Dearing Inquiry into higher education highlighted the need to give greater recognition for that role and to make it of equal importance to the research profile of the institution (Dearing, 1997; recommendation 8). The late Lord Dearing's identification of the need for universities to establish, develop and implement a learning and teaching strategy was just one of the 93 recommendations he made in his report. Many might argue that his recommendation of tuition fees has had the greatest impact on universities and students' experience of higher education. The reforms of funding and the expansion of numbers in universities from the 1980s has created very different pressures on a higher education system that was previously geared to providing for low numbers of differently motivated students. This latter context was the background to this inquiry; not just the enhancement of teaching quality in universities but in universities where student numbers and diversity are far greater and resources more challenged then was the case before the 1979 general election.

The definition of quality, of 'good teaching', and quality enhancement were never clear and it is more a question of who was doing the defining (Massey, 1978; Sursock,

2002). Enhancement implies improvement and development of something already of good quality—doing it better and with innovative methods. Teaching quality enhancement in this inquiry has been revealed as requiring the provision of discursive spaces for academics to engage in debate and innovation in their pedagogy.

In my experience, previously as an academic in the School of Biosciences and more lately as the University's TQEF Manager, I have always been privileged to see the highest levels of professionality amongst staff. The majority of staff in my experience are professional in the way they engage with their students and the teaching they provide. Some indeed are highly innovative and deliver teaching of the highest calibre. But for most this professionalism is what Hoyle (1974) has described as restricted as it is intuitive only, rather than based upon a wider view of evidence and the literature. For an extended professional teaching is rational, based on the literature as well as experience, and values collaboration and engagement. In this view an effective LTS is one that promotes teaching as a scholarly pursuit and the extension of the professionality of teachers in communities of practice. It is not a deficit model where the strategy targets 'poor' teaching (however that may be identified).

The TQEF change project for me concerned this professional enhancement dimension. It involved the facilitation of the sharing of good practice and the collaboration of staff within and across disciplines supported within a philosophical policy and strategic objective framework.

TQEF provided two important elements in this change project: firstly, the need to devise an institutional learning and teaching strategy; and secondly, to provide funds for its implementation. The development of the LTS at the University of Westminster, as we have seen, consisted of a policy—a statement of principles—and strategic objectives. This format I have described as a prime strategy (page 39) requiring Schools to develop their own contextualised and purposeful functional strategy. From the start that has proved a

difficulty as Schools, including certain LTCs, did not understand the distinction between prime and functional strategy, and consequently were simply compliant if not resistant in their approach.

8.6 Models of Change

Chapter 6 identified the Quadrant Model of Change to describe the perspectives of the LTCs and by extension academic staff across the University. It demonstrated that change in a university is subject to the same considerations of change as in any other large institution or organisation. For a professional institution it highlighted the importance of ensuring the acceptance and ownership of the requirement and mechanism for change. Identifying champions and adopters only partially succeeded. Too many resistors, particularly in senior positions, jeopardised the cultural changes needed for complete success and sustainability. An understanding of this model and the behavioural or organisational phenomena associated with it would be an effective preliminary consideration for any change project.

This starts with ownership of the problem and the formulation of the strategic solution. The role of senior academic managers in this is crucial just as is that of those who are to implement the strategy. Identifying champions, encouraging adopters and absorbing resistors are all part of this effective project management.

8.7 Summary Findings and Recommendations

The requirements for the continuing enhancement of teaching quality draw upon the findings in this inquiry. That enhancement has occurred through the period of the TQEF and as a result of the LTS is evident. The end of ear-marked funding has the danger that the LTS and its associated activities will become more marginalised as other agendas take precedence. This is evident in the confusion concerning the new Director of Learning

and Teaching position—a real lost opportunity for maintaining a continued and sustained quality enhancement focus. However, many of the good practices of this period are more embedded. This includes the greater recognition of teaching as a professional pursuit and the continued appetite for sharing and collaboration. But that recognition and the value placed on teaching needs to be imaginatively and creatively fostered by universities and their senior academics. Time, resources and support must be devoted to the professional development of academic staff. Senior academics should have a much more intimate association with their own taught provisions, not just the quality assurance procedures, not just workload management, but—crucially—academic leadership. This involves a cultural shift that values teaching, collaboration and innovation. Central to this as an enabling and guiding framework is the University LTS, its continuing review and the strategy required for its implementation. The recommendations for continuing and sustainable enhancement from the inquiry are as follows.

8.7.a Staff Development

Initial teacher training and continuing professional development are at the heart of teaching quality enhancement. Greater value and provision need to be afforded for this. There is more appetite from staff than many have previously suggested. But it is not a priority for all—it should be. Supporting staff to develop the quality of their teaching both individually and to share in communities of practice, has significant benefits for a university's teaching provision.

8.7.b Learning and Teaching Policy and Strategy Formulation

The parts of an effective strategy for change are policy, prime strategy and functional strategies. This is not about a procedure that requires full adherence to a set of regulations. The policy is a set of guiding principles consisting of statements that

incorporate an institution's mission driven values and beliefs. It should reflect the agreed consensus view and be owned by all within the institution. The policy needs to be maintained and renewed with staff and be coherent with other policies. This requires a relationship between the policy-making body and stakeholders. For an LTS that policy body should involve the representatives of academic teaching staff—primarily the Directors of Learning and Teaching from each academic School. The prime strategy that is formulated centrally by this University policy body is a leading framework of principles and prime objectives from which others develop a functional strategy contextualised and purposeful for their own School. The prime strategy should be permissive; allowing each School to translate it into a local, contextualised functional strategy. That School functional strategy should be a major operating principle for School senior management groups.

8.7.c The Management and Leadership of Learning

Senior academics in management positions—the Deans and Heads of Department—are central to the implementation of an effective change strategy. They have to fully embrace and support the implementation by firstly recognising, agreeing and valuing the policy. They have to invest authority in the local School leaders—Directors of Learning and Teaching and others who implement the strategy. That involves identifying the champions of change and with them developing purposeful functional strategies. Deans and Heads need their own developmental support to better embrace academic leadership—as distinct from corporate management—through a close involvement in the design of courses and enhancement of the learning experiences of the students in their discipline.

Learning provision is delivered by course teams led by a course leader. Recognition and support for course leaders and course teams allowing them to work collaboratively to

effect change is vital. Planning for course leader succession and development as academic leaders in the discipline cannot be ignored. Curriculum design, course leadership and a coherent course learning and teaching strategy are the major planks of that scaffold.

8.7.d Communities of Practice

Any means that allows staff to meet and discuss issues in learning and teaching will allow sharing of practice, collaboration on initiatives and innovation in teaching. The University and its academic units need to be imaginative and creative in finding the time to permit and allow staff to meet. University and School celebration of practice through sharing in symposiums helps but it is the capacity for regular engagement of staff from across disciplines and as part of course teams that will have true impact. That is not a one-off project but a recurrent task just as important as annual monitoring, periodic review and audit. Arguably this focus on on-going quality enhancement will render the periodic quality assurance procedures as simple outcomes.

8.7.e Learning and Teaching Culture

The forgoing four elements (a-d) represent together what I think of as a cultural shift for sustainable and effective change. All elements have been enhanced during the period of TQEF and through the need to implement the LTS but without all staff fully embracing them. Cultural change is about getting everyone to recognise and implement these elements not because they are required to but because that is the way they want to work and the way they know how to work. It is about improving learning and teaching as a fully integrated part of professional behaviour, which makes it easier to manage and results in quality enhancement. Quality assurance is then consequential to this culture and non-problematic.

8.8 LTS, Teaching Quality Enhancement and the Future

Since the end of ear-marked TQEF funds there are signs that the University LTS is beginning to be marginalised with longer periods between reviews and these conducted primarily by a single individual rather than by a group of the Schools' Directors of Learning and Teaching and other champions of learning and teaching. The availability of funds for initiatives has been affected by other pressing issues. The cultural shift that saw a move so positively towards enhancement during the TQEF period may drift back towards the bureaucratically pragmatic and intuitive that relies on the individual professional rather than communities of practice. The danger of a backward slide in this culture in the face of radical changes in the funding and management of higher education are real and inevitable without a strategic focus.

Dissemination of the findings of this inquiry could be important in helping to maintain the advancement in learning and teaching culture that occurred during the TQEF period. This requires dissemination to reach those who can make a difference: the champions and adopters, change leaders and others that can use the findings to maintain a functional LTS and continued teaching quality enhancement. The aim should be to continue to persuade the resistors, particularly those in senior academic roles, that an effective LTS is implemented through collaborative communities. The findings are taken from the perspectives of the LTCs and other academics who actively engaged in implementing the LTS. They are the individuals who would be most interested in learning about the inquiry findings. Externally, those counterparts in other universities would also find this of interest. The question is what is the most effective way to reach each audience? Dissemination in a journal article is traditional for reaching a wide audience but that alone would confine the findings to research-active and extended professional academics and so not easily reach the practice community of teachers and academic leaders. Beyond articles other forms of more accessible and targeted writing are

necessary—the position paper, strategy proposal and online resources. Additionally, presentations at learning and teaching events such as the University's Annual Learning and Teaching Symposium, but also workshop and forums in Schools are suitable means to disseminate. The use of existing activities, relationships and networks—those established during the TQF period—should be fully utilised in this approach.

To avoid further erosion of benefits gained during the TQEF period a new project is needed that rejuvenates the University LTS for continued quality enhancement; to enable that focus on the professional teacher. Collaboration is the way forward and there is the possibility for creating a 'change academy' within the University. I would envision that as something that involves the Directors of Learning and Teaching and other champions of the enhancement of learning and teaching.

Creating a research group in tandem with this new change project would allow for a more detailed evaluation of effective strategies and how plans are implemented. The research group could valuably look at the importance and impact of communities of practice and situated learning in promoting and implementing LTS policy and strategic objectives. Hattie (2012, p.169) encourages schools to 'know thy impact'; to know that all staff can have an impact on students' learning and the criterion for success. This research group focus would involve exploring questions about learning and the conditions for learning that are relevant to communities of practice, including what type of empirical evidence is needed to recognize the enhancement of learning and teaching occurring and the factors that affect impact.

Additionally, this group could research the better management and leadership of quality enhancement in learning and teaching from policy and strategy formulation through to facilitation of communities of practice. This could explore the development of a framework or set of criteria for the organisation of effective communities of practice for quality enhancement.

That group cross-discipline research would involve the many champions and adopters of change for quality enhancement uncovered in during the TQEF period. They would as a result of the research group activity have more authority and impact with senior academics, management and resistors in general. My vision is to further that cultural shift in learning and teaching in the University realized during the period of the TQEF and so light all the dark corners. Not such a little candle!

9. Appendix A: Role of Learning and Teaching Coordinator

In this agreement the LTC was to:

- work with their Dean of School in identifying all needs in relation to implementation of the University's LTS;
- work with their Dean of School in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of staff development policies and support within the School;
- work with the Dean of School in determining the TQEF expenditure within the School;
- act as a local focus for staff in disseminating and promoting the University's LTS;
- encourage and support both new and established staff in achievement of Higher Education Academy (formerly ILTHE) membership;
- encourage and support the School in the full implementation and development of Peer Observation processes, and resulting dissemination of good practice;
- promote staff development within the School in the delivery of learning, with particular emphasis on student-centred learning, independent learning, flexibility of provision and use of ICT in delivery;
- support the inclusion of, and assessment of, skills in the curriculum in relation to issues of employability, skills profiling and personal development planning;
- participate in provision of staff development where appropriate;
- disseminate good practice in learning, teaching and assessment within the School and throughout the University;
- participate in the Learning, Teaching and Strategy Implementation Group (LSIG) with the other School LTCs and the Senior Academic HE (based in the EIC) to help disseminate good practice and share ideas;
- formally report on the progress within the School of the implementation of the University LTS to School Management Groups, LSIG and the Senior Academic HE; and
- inform staff in the School of opportunities for development, and to act as a channel of information with the EIC about staff development opportunities, activities and needs.

10. Appendix B. Preformed Questions Guide

A. Strategic Objectives

1. What is your understanding of the University LTS policy?
2. What are your views on this policy?
3. What do you think about the strategic objectives and their development?
4. In your view, which of the strategic objectives have been well met and ...
5. ... which poorly met?
6. Has identifying certain strategic objectives as priority been an effective development?
7. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about the LTS policy and the strategic objectives?

B. Strategic Implementation

8. What is your view of the yearly setting of University-wide non-prescriptive targets?
9. Was this in your view an effective process?
10. How would you describe your School's response to this target setting exercise?
11. What role was taken by Dean, Heads of Department, LTCs and others in this process?
12. How did the School decide their detailed targets? Was it a collaborative whole-School process or decided upon by one or two individuals?
13. Were targets SMART and led by named individuals?
14. What were the successes and failures of this process?
15. Do you now consider that you have embedded processes that meet this need?

C. Impact

16. How did you monitor and report the progress of your targets?
17. What impact has the LTS had on the quality enhancement of your School's taught provision?
18. ... give some examples.
19. Has the impact been universal in your School?
20. What changes are required to make the LTS more effective?
21. How would you describe academic leadership, in the context of learning and teaching, within your School and ...

22. … within the University?

23. What changes would you consider needed for a more effective management of learning and teaching?

Introductory Statement

The statement that follows was given to each interviewee to read before starting.

> *Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. You will be aware that this is an inquiry commissioned by the Learning Policy Review Group (LPRG) into the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. LPRG is keen to establish the views of staff on the strategy, its implementation and impact in order to inform its revision post-TQEF. The inquiry is also part of my own doctoral research. My role here is simply to establish your own particular views around a number of categories of inquiry. You were selected because of your own particular involvement in the implementation of the strategy in your School. The interview proceedings are entirely confidential and your anonymity is assured. The report of the project will be submitted to LPRG and will be available electronically on-line. I will take some notes but to aid my memory I would like to record our conversation. All such records will be destroyed at the end of the project. Please see below for your rights as a participant in this inquiry. Are you content that I record our discussion?*

Your rights as a research participant

- Participation in the inquiry is voluntary.
- You may withdraw or stop the interview at any time.
- You may refuse to answer any of the questions.
- All digital recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the inquiry.
- Your confidentiality will be strictly respected. Your name as well as any details that could identify you personally will not be identifiable in any reports.
- Anything you say will only be reported as anonymised quotations.
- You may request a transcript of your anonymised quotations.
- Your name and personal details will not be shared with any third party.
- The key findings of the inquiry will be reported and will be available to you on request.
- Any questions or concerns you may have can be discussed at any time before, during or after the interview.

Appendix C: University of Westminster LTS 2009

ENHANCING THE CURRICULUM @ WESTMINSTER

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LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

2009-11

ENHANCING THE CURRICULUM
@ WESTMINSTER

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LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY
2009–11

Contents

This Policy and Strategy has been compiled by the University Learning Policy Review Subcommittee, and approved by the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee.

An electronic version can be found at http://www.westminster.ac.uk/page-4897
http://westminsteruni.dev.squiz.co.uk/schools/exchange.

If you require further clarification please contact Ann Rumpus or Will Whitlock, Westminster Exchange.

Contact Will Whitlock, Westminster Exchange,
if you require the document in a larger typeface.

LTAS 2009-11 Preface

This preface sets out the context in which the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) has been revised and developed for 2009/11. It is recognised that there have been a number of changes within the University which impact on the provision, but also that there has been significant improvement and enhancement of practice on which Schools can build. Many of the changes provide an exciting opportunity to review and develop curriculum design and delivery in interesting and innovative ways.

The Learning Policy Review Subcommittee undertook a comprehensive review of the narrative sections of LTAS (the Policy) for 08/09 and these are left largely unchanged, apart from minor updating and changes of terminology. The five strategic priorities were also revised for 08/09, these are still pertinent and thus remain substantially unchanged; a sixth strategic priority has been added on 'transition and progression'.

There are elements of change within the University including:

- A reduction from 10 to 7 Schools and significant changes in their structures.
- Appointments to the new role of School Directors of Learning, Teaching and Quality for the 2009-10 session onwards, to take a leading role in the implementation of LTAS.
- The establishment in each School of a Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committee with a remit to ensure that Quality Enhancement is fully addressed within the School.
- Significant reorganisation of Corporate Services, some elements of which are still in an early stage of implementation.
- The fusion of the CEPLW, EIC and OLLD into Westminster Exchange.
- The removal of the 'ring-fenced' Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund with its requirement for specific yearly targets and reporting.

In light of this the implementation strategy for LTAS is spread over two years, 2009-2011; with a requirement to report on progress at the end of 2010 and 2011 academic session.

The University Executive Board and the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee are strongly committed to enhancing curriculum design, delivery and support at level 4, and enhancing progression from level 4. This is the focus of the Schools' activity expressed in this document, through the development and implementation of their own strategies for level 4, in light of the six strategic objectives for learning and teaching, and adjusting their approaches to those strategic priorities which are locally most significant, and drawing on innovations and excellence from their own School, from elsewhere in the institution and externally.

LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT POLICY 2009-11

Purpose

1. This Policy defines the University's ethos of learning, teaching and assessment. It provides a base from which Schools (and Corporate Services and Westminster Exchange) can specify their detailed approaches as appropriate to their subject, curriculum and student needs.
2. The Policy also acts as a framework for discussing and promoting effective practice in all aspects of curriculum design, learning, teaching and assessment, and as a basis for the evaluation and ongoing development of the provision.
3. The Policy (and Strategy) is revised annually, reflecting issues raised by the University academic community and any external changes.
4. The Policy is use to inform external agencies, such as QAA and Professional and Statutory Bodies, of the University's approach to its core activity of learning and teaching.

Principles

a. The University is a community of learners, creating a stimulating learning environment with active participation by both students and tutors in the learning process, in which the students are placed at the centre, and which facilitates the range of students' learning styles.
b. Courses are designed to encourage students to be self-motivated and independent learners; self-aware, able to reflect on their learning, and to manage their own personal development and career planning.
c. The University is committed to widening participation, to helping students benefit fully from their studies, to enhancing the quality of the provision and to identifying and supporting groups of students who may face barriers in the employment market.
d. Learning and teaching strategies are responsive to the changing contexts with respect to students' expectations and prior and current experience, and to the changing work environment.
e. The University uses teaching approaches that encourage intellectual freedom as one of its underlying ethical tenets.
f. The University encourages and supports strategic collaborative partnerships for the delivery of courses, to reach a wider group of students, as long as the requirements for the quality of the courses are maintained.
g. The University facilitates the expanding role of its libraries and learning resource centres to engage with the changes in accessibility of information, affecting teaching and research.
h. The University actively supports the growing use of technology, both within and outside of the classroom, to enhance learning, teaching and the student experience.
i. Students' learning is supported through the activities of a range of Corporate Services and Westminster Exchange that either directly interact with students or that provide the context within which the delivery of a high quality student experience is seen as a primary responsibility.
j. The University actively supports the continued personal development of its staff including staff development, dissemination of best practice, scholarship, research and knowledge transfer.

Policy Implementation

The implementation of the policy is described through five areas: curriculum design; course delivery; assessment; resources and staff, which set out the framework within which students learn. These five areas are described in more detail later. In summary they are:

1. **Curriculum Design**: is concerned with both the content and processes of delivery of the curriculum so as to ensure an active and positive student learning experience, which encompasses both subject attributes and embedded lifelong learning capabilities.
2. **Course Delivery**: Learning and teaching methods promote student-centred, active learning and enhance opportunities for flexible learning and enquiry-based approaches.
3. **Assessment**: is delivered as an integral part of the student-centred learning processes, and is designed to be fit-for-purpose in demonstrating the achievement of the specific learning outcomes.
4. **Technology and Resources**: Technology is used generally in an integrated way with face-to-face teaching, and other methods, to support course delivery and assessment; with the development of distance learning for niche markets.
5. **Staff**: The University is committed to the continuous professional development of all academic and support staff in relation to professionalism, undertaking scholarship to enhance learning, teaching and assessment, and discipline-specific expertise, including those staff who deliver University courses in partner institutions.

Curriculum Design

Curriculum design is concerned with both the content and processes of delivery of the curriculum so as to ensure an active and positive student learning experience, which encompasses both subject attributes and embedded lifelong learning capabilities.[1]

a. The curriculum is aligned in relation to the learning outcomes, assessment and delivery methods.

b. Learning, teaching and assessment methods are continuously evaluated to ensure ongoing fitness for purpose, informed by student feedback, including alumni, in the review and development processes.

c. The curriculum enhances the students' acquisition and awareness of a wide range of academic and professional skills, including career management skills and personal development planning. These embedded elements are clearly articulated within the course documentation. Course teams select an approach which is appropriate to the subject.

d. Curriculum design engenders a capacity for lifelong learning such that the outcomes of the University education are sustainable beyond the students' immediate HE experience.

e. The course design is fully informed by the QAA academic Infrastructure[2].

f. Online technology approaches are primarily used as blended learning to add an extra dimension to and enhance on-campus delivery. Support for flexible and distance learning is encouraged and supported where a School has identified a clear market.

g. Learning, teaching and assessment processes are informed by research and knowledge transfer activities, to enable students to understand, learn and benefit from research-led enquiry and, where appropriate, undertake such research appropriate to their level and discipline.

h. Collaboration with employers and professional bodies informs curriculum design; facilitates access to labour market information; encourages understanding of employer requirements and provides access to work-related learning opportunities. Students are supported in accessing paid and unpaid voluntary work experience opportunities as described in the Student Employment Policy. Where appropriate, courses are accredited by professional bodies to improve students' professional and career development.

i. The learning achieved through Continuing Professional Development (including experiential and course-based learning) is valued through an emerging CPD Accreditation Framework.

j. Students are encouraged to reflect on and articulate their learning from participation in work (voluntary, part-time or full-time paid employment) and other areas of personal initiative.

k. The curriculum builds on the diversity of our students (both overseas and home-based) to develop international relevance both in content and delivery.

l. The University supports the emerging green agenda which will be incorporated into the curriculum as appropriate.

Course Delivery

Learning and teaching methods promote student-centred, active learning and enhance opportunities for flexible learning and enquiry-based approaches.[3]

a. Learning and teaching methods are centred on the students' learning experiences and promote active student participation.

b. A range of learning and teaching approaches are used which support the achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes by the students.

c. Learning and teaching methods meet the diverse learning needs of the student groups[4] recruited onto courses, with attention to issues of fair access and equal opportunity.

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[1] See Westminster Exchange Guide, *Principles and Processes of Curriculum Design*, at http://westminsteruni.dev.squiz.co.uk/schools/exchange, the *Curriculum Design Toolkit* (a web-based guide under construction), and *Skills in the Curriculum—A Guide* produced by CaSE, ISLS and EIC. At http://www.wmin.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=2151

[2] The QAA Academic Infrastructure can be found at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/

[3] See Westminster Exchange *Guide to Student-Centred Learning*, http://westminsteruni.dev.squiz.co.uk/schools/exchange

[4] Diversity includes, amongst others, international students, disabled students, differences in ethnicity and in learning styles. Guides to designing and delivering an inclusive curriculum are available from the Disability Services and Westminster Exchange.

d. Teaching includes embedded opportunities for students to gain feedback on their learning, beyond those which are directly attached to feedback on assessment.

e. Students are supported in developing the learning skills required for successful HE study.

f. All courses include elements of work-related learning; ranging from skills development to work-related and accredited work-based learning activities.

g. Prior learning, whether certificated or experiential, is recognised and accredited where appropriate.

h. Students are supported by personal tutoring, to guide their academic and personal development, as described in the University's Personal Tutoring Policy[5].

i. Appropriate communication channels ensure that all students and staff have equal, sufficient and timely access to information.

Assessment

Assessment is delivered as an integral part of the student-centred learning processes, and is designed to be fit-for-purpose in demonstrating the achievement of the specific learning outcomes.[6]

a. Assessment methods (both formative and summative) utilised are valid and effective.

b. Assessment methods provide an opportunity for new learning, contribute to the learning process and engender sustainable learning.

c. The reliability of the assessment process is ensured by internal moderation and external scrutiny.

d. Assessment is criterion-based. Students are provided with the assessment criteria by which their work will be marked and with timely formative feedback on their performance, so as to support their further study and successful achievement.

e. In selecting assessment methods consideration is given to maintaining acceptable assessment loading for both students and staff.

f. Staff use assessment methods designed to reduce the opportunities for plagiarism and cheating. Students are informed of the unacceptability of plagiarism and cheating, and are provided with guidance on these issues[7].

Technology and Resources

Technology is used generally in an integrated way with face-to-face teaching, and other methods, to support course delivery and assessment.[8]

a. The University actively encourages and promotes the appropriate use of technology to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and academic administration.

b. Technology-Enhanced Learning (formerly referred to as Blended Learning) - the effective combination of different modes of delivery; online learning, use of other forms of classroom-based technology and face-to-face teaching - is used to enhance the student learning experience.

c. The University Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)[9] is used to support students and for interactive delivery of learning as appropriate to the module learning outcomes, to support the development of career management and employability skills, to provide administrative support and to distribute teaching materials.

d. The University ensures that high quality libraries, learning resource centres, study space and support enhance learning and teaching.

e. Staff in the library and learning resource centre are supported in their professional development to ensure the best service available to students and staff.

f. Technology is used to underpin an innovative and responsive learning environment and to provide electronic access to learning materials and library resources.

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[5] Personal Tutoring Policy 2005, http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-4478

[6] See the three Westminster Exchange Guides to Assessment and the *Curriculum Design Toolkit* (a web-based guide under construction), http://westminsteruni.dev.squiz.co.uk/schools/exchange
and the outcomes of the *Review of Assessment and Feedback*.

[7] University Policy on Academic Integrity

[8] Technology-Enhanced Learning Strategy, http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-4478.

[9] The University uses the market leading product called 'Blackboard'.

g. Technology is used in the delivery of courses, where possible, to support environmental sustainability and to promote inclusivity.

h. The Estates Strategy of the University is developing with reference to emerging teaching and learning practices and requirements in order to provide for a range of new approaches to learning.

Staff

The University is committed to the continuous professional development of all academic and Corporate Services staff in relation to professionalism, their role in enhancing learning, teaching and assessment, and discipline-specific expertise, including those staff who deliver University courses in partner institutions.

a. Academic leaders are committed to supporting staff development in teaching, learning and assessment through a range of activities including mentoring, taught provision, refection on practice, teaching observation, peer observation and through module and course evaluation.

b. All staff with a role in supporting student learning take responsibility for their own developmental activities (discipline specific and in support of their teaching), mediated through the Staff Development Policy[10], and supported by appropriate allocations of resources.

c. Academic staff who are new to teaching (on a 0.5 appointment or above) are required to take the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education to support their teaching role, and will receive, as a minimum, the Academic Council approved relief from their teaching hours.

d. Research students who teach or assess students' work are required to take courses on supporting learning provided by Westminster Exchange.

e. Staff are committed to gaining feedback from students and alumni (including course committees, module feedback questionnaires, student experience questionnaires, international student barometer, national student survey).

f. The University values providing all staff that support learning with the time and space to collaborate and share ideas and good practice.

g. Library staff are encouraged to engage in a variety of innovative teaching partnerships with Schools, supporting new teaching initiatives which include the use of electronic library resources as a key component.

[10] Staff development Policy, http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-15166

LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY 2009-11

Strategic Objectives for Learning and Teaching

It is agreed that for 2009-11 the six priority objectives will be applied to the enhancement of all aspects of the level 4 curriculum (including level 3 where deemed appropriate by Schools). This is to ensure that students are able to make an effective transition to higher education, and are able to respond to the demands of a challenging teaching environment and to become independent learners. The priority objectives are:

a. Student-centred, active learning

- To develop a University-wide shared understanding of student-centred, active learning, particularly through the processes of Curriculum and Assessment Enhancement support.
- To use the new undergraduate academic model to enhance the delivery of student-centred, active learning.
- To implement approaches to student-centred, active learning in all taught courses.
- To recognise and value of the diversity of our students in developing internationalisation in the curriculum, both in terms of content and delivery.

b. Teaching informed and enriched by research[11]

i. Teaching, scholarship and research links within the disciplines

- To ensure that the curriculum is informed by up-to-date research in the discipline.
- To ensure students learn through a process of research/enquiry, and emerge from their higher education with sound understanding of research in the discipline and research capabilities as appropriate.

ii. Research and scholarly approaches to pedagogy

- To support the development of scholarly activities in learning and teaching so as to inform curriculum design and delivery.
- To encourage research into salient issues impacting on learning, teaching and assessment including work-related learning and employer engagement, technology-enhanced learning, inclusive practice and supporting student diversity.

c. Assessment

- To use efficient and effective approaches to assessment, which are both integrated into the learning processes and fit-for-purpose to measure the learning outcomes, as defined by the Assessment and Feedback review.
- To provide feedback for students which they find timely and helpful, including feedback on examinations.
- To ensure appropriate assessment loading for both students and staff.
- To implement the University policy on anonymous marking of coursework where possible.
- To support staff in these developments through the processes of Curriculum and Assessment Enhancement support and the Assessment Toolkit.

d. Technology-Enhanced Learning

- To develop a shared University understanding of the role of technology in enhancing learning.
- To promote the use of technology, where it can help to interactively engage students, and encourage student to student interaction.
- To increase the use and effectiveness of Blackboard, and other technologies, to enhance students' face to face learning opportunities and to provide information and learning materials to students
- To exploit Web 2.0 technologies[12] in facilitating collaborative and active student-centred learning.

[11] See forthcoming Westminster Exchange guide on TieR.

[12] Web 2.0 technologies include, amongst others, wikis, blogs, podcasting, social networking.

e. Transition and progression

- To help students refine their expectations of studying in higher education, and to prepare for it, through a variety of pre-arrival and induction provision.
- To support students in understanding and developing the capabilities for successful study in higher education, through activities embedded into their first year provision, to increase students' progression and achievement.
- To engender students who can work at an increasing level of autonomy as they progress so as to achieve the highest levels of attainment at each level and to present themselves for progression into work with confidence.

f. Employability, Enterprise and Work-related Learning

- To facilitate students in acquiring a range of skills (built on enquiry-based, research-informed approaches, and values for professional life).
- To support students' lifelong learning through promoting their self-awareness, personal development planning and career management skills; to provide opportunities for work-related learning and career development, in collaboration with relevant employers, as informed and supported by the University's External Engagement Strategy[13]
- To develop a wider range of enterprise, work-related learning and voluntary and community-based opportunities for all students, to support students' applied disciplinary learning, professional and commercial awareness and their development of a range of attributes.
- To draw on the expertise of the Centre for Excellence in Professional Learning from the Workplace[14] and CaSE to support staff in developing work-placed learning within the curriculum.

[13] Currently under development.

[14] Now part of Westminster Exchange.

LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2009-11

1. The delivery of the Strategy is the responsibility of all members of staff who support student learning. The prime responsibility is that of the Dean; this is mediated through the Heads of Department, School Directors of Learning, Teaching and Quality, Course Leaders and others with academic leadership responsibilities. This is supported by the significant contribution from a range of corporate and central services.

2. The implementation of this strategy will be carried out in the context of the framework of awards and regulations laid out in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook (the yellow book) and the Handbook of Academic Regulations (the red book), and the design of courses as approved through validation/re-validation and review.

3. Good practice in programme design and delivery is disseminated through staff and educational development opportunities at course, Department, School and University level, supported by the actions of the School Directors of Learning, Teaching and Quality, the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committees and facilitated by Westminster Exchange. Such continuing professional development is seen as an essential element in achieving the outcomes of the Policy and Strategy.

4. The following table shows the agreed University-wide LTAS targets for 2009-11

5. Schools are required to develop their strategies and implementation plans for the enhancement of level 4 provision, in light of the five priority objectives, to be presented to the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee during the autumn term 2009, and will report on progress achieved at the end of each academic session, as will Corporate Services and Westminster Exchange. Schools may identify their own priorities in relation to the University objectives and will address those areas of highest local significance[15]. http:///

6. It should be noted that setting these strategies does not constrain staff from undertaking other enhancements, within the context of their School's policies on learning, teaching and assessment.

Responsibility Key

AS: Academic Services (Academic Registrar)
CEPLW: Centre for Excellence in Professional Learning from the Workplace (Director) part of Westminster Exchange
D: Dean of School
HR: Human Resources
PO: Planning Office
LTSSC: Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee (Chair)
WEx Westminster Exchange

[15] Ideas on developing the level 4 curriculum were developed in a UEB special meeting on learning and teaching, These are summarised in appendix 1

University-wide LTAS Targets 2009-11

	Schools
1	Schools to develop strategies and implementation plans for enhancing the design and delivery of the level 4 curriculum (including level 3 if appropriate) in light of the six strategic priorities, to report on these strategies to the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee in autumn 2009. **D**
2	Schools to report on their progress on these strategies and plans at the end of the academic session in 2010 and 2011. **D**
3	Implement the University policies on e-submission of coursework, anonymous marking and providing feedback to students on performance in examinations. **D**
4	Develop School mechanisms for encouraging and supporting scholarship and research into learning and teaching. **D**
5	Apply the emerging External Engagement Strategy to the delivery of the curriculum at all levels, and in light of the revised QAA Code of practice Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance. **D**
	Westminster Exchange
6	Level 4 working party to identify University-wide issues and examples of good practice, and to make recommendations to the LTSSC. **WEx, LTSSC**
7	Provide networking support to the School Learning and Teaching Directors in the development of the Schools' strategic approaches to learning and teaching. **WEx**
8	Current and emerging good practice in the enhancement level 4 provision to be disseminated by the Westminster Exchange working with the School Learning and Teaching Directors. **WEx**
9	Emphasise the emerging good practice at level 4 as an element of the Curriculum and Assessment Enhancement workshops. **WEx, AS**
10	Collate and disseminate best practice on the use of online information and activities with students prior to arrival at University. **WEx**
11	Develop guidance in relation to emerging good practice in relation to level 4 provision on the Westminster Exchange curriculum toolkit website. **WEx**
12	Develop guidance on approach to providing feedback to students on their performance in examinations. **WEx**
13	Collate and disseminate examples of good practice in Teaching informed and enriched by Research (TieR). **WEx**
14	Continue investigation into differential performance of Black and Minority Ethnic students, for report to the LTSCC. **WEx, PO**
15	Work with Schools and the LTSSC and Research Committee to establish the strategic approach to scholarly activity and research into learning and teaching. **WEx, D**
16	Establish the Accreditation Board and undertake a pilot accreditation of CPD. **CEPLW**
17	To develop, validate and deliver experiential learning elective modules, that will enable students to gain academic credit through structured reflection on enterprise, voluntary and community based activities. **CEPLW**

18	Provide networking and support for School academic staff in their development of work integrated learning and their implementation of the External Engagement Strategy. **CEPLW**
	Corporate Services
19	Finalise and Implement the proposed CPD framework for academic staff. **HR, WEx, D**
20	Develop a singe location on the University website where all the University policies and strategies are located. **AS**

Appendix

Developing Level 4 as a transition year which would equip students for the remainder of their studies as independent learners—ideas drawn from the UEB extended meeting on Learning and Teaching (27 Jan 2009).

This might include:

- Helping students to understand what they have embarked on with pre-arrival information, better open days and taster days.
- Help students understand expectations of HE study, and support this, through induction embedded throughout the first year.
- Carefully structured level 4 learning with properly embedded Guided Independent Study (GIS) to help students to engage with the feedback on their assessed work.
- Make more use of active engagement with the student voice.
- Introduce more social aspects into learning.
- Increased emphasis on Personal Development Planning and employer engagement.
- A focus on academic writing and English writing skills.
- Smaller class groups at Level 4.
- Better social opportunities for students.
- Schools to have a member of staff who understands transition issues and the 14-19 curriculum.
- Review of the Access Agreement.
- Focusing peer observations on level 4.

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